
**BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
HEALTHY GROWTH STRATEGIES WORK SESSION AGENDA
MAY 21, 2019
11:00 A.M. - 1:00 P.M.
BOARD CHAMBERS**

CALL TO ORDER - ROLL CALL OF MEMBERS

WORK SESSION AGENDA ITEMS

1. COUNTY ADMINISTRATION; DISCUSSION OF POSSIBLE HEALTHY GROWTH STRATEGIES

This agenda may be amended on the day of the meeting. Participation of all citizens is encouraged. For all individuals with special needs, please notify County Administration of any accommodations required at least 24 hours in advance of the meeting. The agenda and related materials may be found on the County's website at www.staffordcountyva.gov

Stafford County
Board of Supervisors Meeting
Agenda Item Report
Meeting Date: May 21, 2019
WORK SESSION AGENDA ITEMS

Subject:	
COUNTY ADMINISTRATION; DISCUSSION OF POSSIBLE HEALTHY GROWTH STRATEGIES	
Recommended Action:	
This is a discussion to provide Board direction to staff on next steps for the Healthy Growth initiative.	
Committee/Commission Recommendation:	
N/A	
Fiscal Impact:	District:
N/A	
Overview:	
<p>The Board of Supervisors identified healthy growth as a priority last fall when it adopted Stafford's first-ever Strategic Plan and Stafford County 2040 Vision for the Future. The Board's vision for Stafford County is a flourishing community that features walkable, attractive urban areas, and preserved open spaces in the rural areas, enhancing the cultural assets of the County. To accomplish this vision, growth is channeled into Targeted Growth Areas, allowing the County to focus infrastructure improvements to efficiently serve the citizens of Stafford with levels of service that enhance their quality of life. The rural areas are protected to preserve our natural and historical resources and expand recreational opportunities.</p> <p>The Strategic Plan calls for actionable steps over the next three years to identify and execute growth management strategies that align with Stafford's Comprehensive Plan without negatively impacting taxation. Both citizen input and staff research have been a critical elements in the development of possible strategies for further action.</p>	
Discussion/Analysis:	
Recently, the County has seen a rising trend of residential development in rural areas without the	

proper infrastructure to maintain Stafford's excellent level of service to residents. That development, coupled with a 16% rise in the County's population since 2010 prompted the Board of Supervisors to redouble its efforts in examining healthy growth to channel development into areas where infrastructure and services can be provided more efficiently. According to studies conducted by the Weldon Cooper Center for Public Services, the Washington Counsel of Governments and Stafford County's Comprehensive Plan, growth in the County is going to continue due to outside forces and internal population growth. Furthermore, there have been several announcements of new regional investments that are likely to directly impact Stafford's growth such as Amazon's new headquarters in Arlington County, Virginia Tech's expansion in Northern Virginia and the new Micron facility in Prince William County. Each of these projects is expected to increase the pressure for additional housing and growth in the area. Management of that growth is imperative.

Staff has conducted extensive research over the past year regarding potential changes to zoning in the rural areas and incentives to shift rural development to the urban areas, as well as conducting a thorough public engagement process. The consultant report on the public engagement process is included as Attachment 1. A white paper has also been developed on the status of growth in Stafford, the history of actions taken by the Board over the years, the costs of growth and a variety of strategies that could be used to manage growth through changes in zoning and incentives. This research is included as Attachment 2.

The purpose of the work session is for the Board to provide direction to staff on the strategies it would like to see move forward.

Attachments:

1. Attachment 1. Healthy Growth Public Engagement Report and Appendices
2. Attachment 2. Healthy Growth Management Research and Strategies
3. Attachment 3. Growth Management Strategy Chart

Summary/Conclusion:

A large amount of information is included in **Attachment 1** - *Healthy Growth Public Engagement Report and Appendices* and in **Attachment 2** - *Healthy Growth Management Research and Strategies*. **Attachment 3** - *Growth Management Strategy Chart* combines and summarizes all information from both the public process and staff's previous research for the Board's use in considering alternatives. Staff is ready to advance the initiative in which ever direction the Board desires.

Strategic Priorities:

Healthy Growth

Reviewed By:

Rysheda McClendon, County Attorney (Legal Review Only)
Thomas C. Foley, County Administrator

Stafford County Healthy Growth Initiative
Community Outreach Report

April 30, 2019

Reference: Stafford Healthy Growth Initiative – Community Outreach Report**INTRODUCTION**

Stantec facilitated a comprehensive community outreach program related to the County's Healthy Growth Initiative. The goal of the outreach was to provide ample opportunity for all members of the community to provide input and feedback on the approach to managing growth in the County.

This report details the following information:

- **Process and Methodology** – describes both the goals of the public engagement process as well as descriptions of staff and consultant roles and responsibilities. The section outlines the various opportunities for participation, and the different methods by which community members could share feedback such as in-person and online, in large and small group settings. Here, we describe in detail the range of community members who were reached through each method and outline the educational presentation that was included as part of the sessions.
- **Best Practices** – discusses growth management tools used both in Stafford County, as well as those utilized in peer counties within Virginia. Methods include those related to facilitating and incentivizing growth in targeted areas, and those to protect and preserve rural areas within the counties. The Best Practices section also discusses tools centered around zoning and development rights.
- **Listening to the Community** – details the specifics of the community outreach sessions, including informational interviews, roundtable discussions, and public meetings. This section outlines the major themes taken away from each session.
- **Observations** – summarizes consultant observations from each of the community outreach sessions. Here, themes are organized into general themes that were heard throughout the engagement process, as well as categorizes certain feedback specifically related to incentivizing growth inside the Targeted Growth Areas (TGAs) and evaluating zoning in areas outside of the Urban Services Area (USA).

Reference: **Stafford Healthy Growth Initiative – Community Outreach Report**

PROCESS AND METHODOLOGY

PROCESS OVERVIEW

Public Engagement Goals

- Provide educational opportunities regarding Stafford County growth management issues, Comprehensive Plan vision and land use goals, Stafford's Healthy Growth Initiative and best practices among peer counties for rural preservation and urban area vibrancy.
- Gather targeted and general public feedback about potential growth management strategy options and challenges related to the three-year priorities of the Healthy Growth Initiative.
- Ensure fair and equal access to the public engagement opportunities, keep public informed about the effort throughout the process. The consultant was used to ensure that County officials did not unduly influence the outcome of the public input.
- Provide a transparent process for how public input is considered in developing alternatives and strategies.
- Disseminate community input to ultimate decision-makers for their consideration, valuing all feedback equally.

Roles and Responsibilities

- **Staff** – Work with the consultant team to ensure the effectiveness of the public engagement process, provide review and analysis in accordance with established county policies and plans. In addition, keep the community informed about progress on the engagement effort, and communicate how public input has shaped the recommended options. Finally, present analysis to the Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors.
- **Consultant team** – Provide research and assessment services as well as work with staff to prepare materials for the individual interviews, roundtables, and public meetings. Lead and facilitate all public engagement events, participate in key meetings in order to convey findings and provide insights on feedback that was gathered. Create a final written report to share all feedback, summarize key themes and offer observations.

METHODOLOGY

The public engagement process was intentionally designed to make sure that representative groups had a clear opportunity and multiple methods by which to participate so that diverse viewpoints were articulated. The team facilitated targeted outreach through individual interviews and roundtable discussions to capture segments of the community that may have specific perspectives to offer. The team offered ample opportunities to anyone from the public through general invitation public meetings, online opportunities, and media outlets.

All input provided during all these various engagement opportunities was captured and has been provided in this report in both full transcript and summary/thematic form. The feedback obtained by all the methods has been treated equally in how it is presented and how it is being considered as the process moves forward.

Reference: Stafford Healthy Growth Initiative – Community Outreach Report

There has been no preferential treatment given to feedback gathered in any one of the process steps outlined below. The different methods served to provide a variety of means to ensure that a full spectrum of input was gathered so that it could be provided to decision makers.

All public engagement activities included an educational component to further the public's understanding of Stafford County growth management issues, Comprehensive Plan vision and land use goals, Stafford's Healthy Growth Initiative and best practices among peer counties for rural preservation and urban area vibrancy.

The community engagement process included the following targeted outreach methods:

Individual Interviews:

- Interviewees were invited from a broad array of representative groups to reflect spectrum of interests including:
 - Residential developers and builders
 - Large and medium scale property owners
 - Soil and Water Conservation district representatives
 - Northern Virginia Conservation Trust representatives
 - Land use attorneys
 - Stafford County Farm Bureau representatives
 - Agricultural industry/farming participants
- Individuals were contacted by email to outline the process, and were provided with background material in advance
- Those who could not participate in interviews were invited to roundtables/public meetings and directed to the project website to capture their feedback
- Interviews included background information via handout plus directed questions
- Conducted 8 individual interviews - all interviews were transcribed and are included in Appendix A

Roundtables:

- Participants were invited from broad array of representative groups to reflect a spectrum of interests including:
 - Realtors
 - Commercial bankers
 - General contractors
 - Quantico Community Liaison Office
 - Homeowners associations
 - Parent-Teacher Organization representatives
 - Friends of the Rappahannock
 - Large and medium scale property owners
- Individuals were contacted by email to outline process, and were provided with background material in advance

Reference: Stafford Healthy Growth Initiative – Community Outreach Report

- Those who could not participate in roundtables were invited to public meetings and directed to project website to capture their feedback
- Roundtables included an upfront educational component (Appendix F) plus directed questions and opportunity for conversation/dialogue among roundtable attendees
- Two round tables were held, with a total of 19 attendees - comments were transcribed along with common themes were identified, and are included in Appendix B

The community engagement process included general outreach to provide multiple opportunities to anyone who wanted to participate in the process via the following methods:

In person:

- Two public meetings were held, on April 22 and April 23, in geographically distinct areas of the County to provide maximum convenience for those interested in attending
- The meetings consisted of an educational overview and then small group discussions facilitated by the consultant team and County staff
- The small group discussions allowed an opportunity for individual comments and feedback as well as summaries of common themes that were shared among the groups at the end of each meeting – this feedback is included in Appendix C and D
- A total of approximately 150 people attended the two meetings. The meetings were advertised as follows:
 - Media announcements
 - Social media postings – Facebook, Twitter and Nextdoor
 - Website posts, page updates and email notifications
 - County News distribution

Online:

- Website – a dedicated project page was created on the County website, under the Board's Strategic Plan section to advertise the public engagement activities and provide an opportunity for feedback for those who could not attend the meetings. Feedback received through the website has been included in this report. The website page has had 823 views for this project.
- Nextdoor – A hyperlocal social platform allowed the County to post information and engage several community members reaching over 6160 people in Stafford.
- Social Media
 - Facebook/Facebook Live – the education component of the first public meeting was shared via Facebook Live for those who could not attend, along with an opportunity to provide comments if desired – the Facebook posts had a reach of 26,700 with 1700 views for the video portion.
 - Twitter – Twitter was used to publicize and share information on this project for a total reach of over 3310 users.
- Traditional Media Channels

Reference: **Stafford Healthy Growth Initiative – Community Outreach Report**

- A total of nine media stories, both digital and print, were published regarding this project.

PROCESS SUMMARY

The public engagement process used both targeted and general outreach to solicit feedback from a variety of perspectives, providing multiple opportunities for anyone in the Stafford County community with an interest in the issue to be engaged. Across all engagement platforms, several thousand people were actively engaged in this community conversation either in person or online along with over 300 specifically coming to one of our targeted outreach opportunities. This process resulted in robust and energetic engagement that yielded significant agreement around some key themes as well as some crucial insights important in future steps of this project.

Reference: **Stafford Healthy Growth Initiative – Community Outreach Report**

BEST PRACTICES

BACKGROUND AND RESEARCH

An important component of analysis and public outreach was review of Stafford's current initiatives to address its growth management issues as well as research best practices among peer counties for rural preservation and urban area vibrancy. This entailed focusing on fairly proximate "peer" counties in Virginia which, while their conditions and characteristics are not entirely duplicative of Stafford, share many of the same growth challenges and have similar visions for accommodating growth. Furthermore, with counties only vested those growth management powers expressly enabled them by the Code of Virginia, using comparable Virginia counties provided the best confidence that their practices are legally possible in Stafford. This meant that certain growth management tools utilized outside of Virginia that would require additional enabling legislation in Virginia, such as adequate public facilities ordinances, caps on building permits and comprehensive impact fees, are not additionally noted. Research initially undertaken by County staff and further verified by the consultant team focused on Fauquier, Loudoun, Prince William, Spotsylvania, Hanover and Albemarle Counties and yielded the following best practices that were presented as part of the public engagement process.

GROWTH AREA INITIATIVES AND INCENTIVES

Stafford:

- *Targeted Growth Areas (TGA)/Urban Development Areas (UDA)* – areas intended for urban form of development allowing residents to work, live, shop and play without fully relying on automobiles; these areas are intended to accommodate approximately 50% of the County's residential growth; desired near-, mid- and long-term phasing of development in the TGAs is detailed to reflect anticipated demand
- *Small Area master plans* – finer level of detail planning within TGAs to establish desired urban, mixed use land use pattern; Courthouse Area is a completed example
- *Transfer of Dev. Rights (TDR)* – allows for the potential transfer of residential development rights from properties outside the TGAs (sending areas) to provide additional residential/commercial development rights in the TGAs (receiving areas); a limited, geographically defined program for transferring residential rights currently exists

Peer Counties:

- *Pro-active infill/redevelopment investments* – public facility and/or financial investment in specified or priority locations such as master planned areas
- *Public/private partnerships* – combination of public and private commitments for infrastructure, services, construction of space, provision of jobs, funding and/or financing development/redevelopment, typically in specified or priority locations such as master planned areas
- *Pro-active zoning changes* – government-initiated zoning to reflect land use planning expectations and better enable development opportunities, typically in specified or priority locations such as master planned areas

Reference: **Stafford Healthy Growth Initiative – Community Outreach Report**

- *Density bonuses for urban objectives* – greater height or density permitted in new development projects with provision of public facilities, amenities, open space, affordable housing, etc. as part of development
- *Higher public service levels* – priority for provision of public facilities and services in growth areas, including location of capital projects, faster public safety response times and extent of public water and sewer service

RURAL AREA PROTECTION AND PRESERVATION

Stafford:

- *TDRs* - (see Growth Area Initiatives and Incentives)
- *Purchase of Dev. Rights (PDR)* – County acquisition of conservation easements voluntarily offered by property owners based on criteria intended to preserve open space and rural lands, farms and forests, environmental resources and natural habitats; acquisitions may be funded through County revenue and outside grant programs
- *Land Use (Use Value) Taxation* – allows for agricultural, horticultural and forest land to be assessed at use value rather than market value; five year roll back reflecting difference applies if acreage falls under minimum requirements, the property is no longer used for qualifying purposes or the property is rezoned to higher density

Peer Counties:

- *Facilitate voluntary easements/partner with Land Trusts* – active local government education about, promotion of and partnership with land trusts and other entities that enable and facilitate land owner's voluntary donation of easements
- *Rural economic development – agri-business/agri-tourism* – typically focused on assisting and promoting local/state priority rural economic activities; one example is support of the Virginia wine industry and wine tourism
- *Voluntary Agricultural/Forestal Districts* – state enabled local ordinances that allow landowners to voluntarily create districts of mutual interest under criteria set out in the Code of Virginia; qualifying land within a district automatically qualifies for agricultural or forestal use-value taxation whether or not a local land use taxation program exists; certain local and state government decisions affecting a district must take into account its existence
- *Resource protection based open space/easements* – acceptance of open space or a purchase or donated easement based on the merits of the resources being protected by the open space/easement
- *Dedicated revenues for PDRs* – a set amount of government revenues dedicated to easement purchase; typically, an amount that corresponds to some portion of a set revenue source such as a tourist lodging or property taxes

Reference: **Stafford Healthy Growth Initiative – Community Outreach Report**

RURAL AREA ZONING AND DEVELOPMENT RIGHTS

Stafford:

- *1 lot per 3 acres, some clustering* – this density corresponds to the A-1 Agricultural zoning district which is intended to reserve areas for agriculture and preserve areas of rural character; cluster subdivision is permitted in a delineated portion of the A-1 district

Peer Counties:

- *Larger min. lot size* – in zoning districts intended to be rural/agricultural with a specified minimum lot size, those minimum lot sizes tend to be larger; generally five or more acres
- *Acreage per lot increases with size of parcel* – rural/agricultural zoning districts in which the average lot size increases as the size of the parcel being subdivided increases; variations have a scale for minimum lot size that changes at certain size thresholds of the parcel being subdivided
- *Resource protection-based clustering/dedicated open space* - open space resulting from clustering based on the merits of the resources being protected by the open space

Reference: **Stafford Healthy Growth Initiative – Community Outreach Report**

LISTENING TO THE COMMUNITY

INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWS AND ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSIONS

On April 8, the Stantec team conducted ten primarily one-on-one interviews with a diverse array of individuals representing expertise or particular interest in areas including conservation, agriculture, land management, and development. While comments expressed included a range of perspectives, the following themes emerged and were consistent across most of the interviews:

- Concern that it is too difficult to achieve rezoning in the USA
- A-1 zoning should not change
- (“Give incentives, don’t rob them”)
- Don’t punish a small number of property owners
- Don’t change the rules mid-inning
- Difficult for local developers to compete with national companies
- Strong advocacy for property rights
- Mixed-message on cluster development
- Luke-warm responses on walkable, connected, mixed-use development
- Schools thought to be over-crowded
- Roads/infrastructure considered insufficient to support new development

These interviews were followed by two Roundtable Discussions on April 10, in which over twenty individuals participated. These larger meetings included representatives from:

- Homeowners Associations
- Quantico Community Liaison
- Commercial Banker
- General Contractor
- PTO
- Friends of the Rappahannock
- Large and medium-sized property owners
- Realtor
- Residential Builders

Reference: **Stafford Healthy Growth Initiative – Community Outreach Report**

As with the one-on-one interviews, many different perspectives were shared, and concerns identified. Toward the end of each session, a series of consistent themes were identified as a group. These included:

Roundtable Session 1 (April 10, 10:00-11:30AM)

- Create fair alternative financial resources
 - Encourage public/private solutions
- Cluster development can work, but it needs to be fixed/done correctly
- Streamline the development process in the TGA
- If we are serious about focusing on the TGA, we need to invest in infrastructure
- TDR can be free market as well
- Education/outreach to land owners, developers, etc.

Roundtable Session 2 (April 10, 1:30-3:00PM)

- Take actions for recommendations from throughout the Comp Plan
- County should focus infrastructure improvements to TGA and other potential priority areas
- There is a recognition that this “is not easy”
- Focus on walkable, mixed-use development
 - Inter-parcel access
 - Connected sidewalks
- Focus School/Infrastructure improvements to TGA
- Get cluster development right
- Recognize that conflicts do exist between farming and residential development
- Recognize the reality that the growth is not going to stop
- Overall, focus on the USA

COMMUNITY FORUMS

Two community forums were held the evenings of April 22 and 23. Combined, approximately 150 community members participated. Each event began with an educational presentation that provided a brief discussion of the County’s Comprehensive Plan vision; an introduction to the Board of Supervisors’ Strategic plan and its three-year priorities; current growth and development conditions across Stafford County; examples of best

Reference: Stafford Healthy Growth Initiative – Community Outreach Report

practices in peer counties; and an overview of key themes that came out of the Informational Interviews and Roundtable Discussions.

Following the presentation, community members formed groups of 6-10 to discuss the presentation and identify opportunities, challenges, and other issues related to Growth Management within Stafford County. Each participant was given a comment sheet on which to provide their personal thoughts. The goal of the exercise, however, was to work together to reach consensus on up to five elements or themes. As anticipated, each group had individuals with diverse opinions, and several community members commented on how enlightening the conversations were.

All groups were asked the following questions:

1. Is there anything from the presentation that resonates with you?
2. From your experience and perspective, what initiatives would incentivize and encourage the quality of life for citizens in the Targeted Growth Areas consistent with the desired urban form?
3. From your experience and perspective, what zoning and rural preservation initiatives could move us toward the desired character in the rural areas as called for in the Comprehensive Plan?
4. What are up to five priorities, opportunities, or concerns that everyone at your table agree with?

The following table summarizes some of the most commonly identified statements on the individual comment sheets:

Opportunities	Challenges	Other Comments
Add library, community center and other community-based services	Expanded development will increase traffic & congestion	Roads in USA do not have the ability to handle the current amount of traffic
Expand Purchase/Transfer of Development Rights County-wide	Infrastructure concerns, both in USA and Rural Areas	Need more affordable housing options
Increase commercial areas to bring in more taxes	Not enough schools	Build new schools before new houses!
Increase minimum lot size to reduce growth	Water issues; particular concerns about long-term availability within Rural Areas for all uses	Keep Stafford as rural as possible
Do not change A-1 Zoning	Higher density projects have difficulty receiving approval in TGA	Do not rush through any decisions
Growth is an opportunity—if infrastructure improvements go along with it.	Need to hold developers to the promises they make during the planning/design phase of development	
Focus on higher quality mixed-use development (full mixed-use)	Transportation options (or lack of) are a challenge	
Focus on easily accessible employment centers		

Reference: **Stafford Healthy Growth Initiative – Community Outreach Report**

Attract additional commercial to support tax base		
Improve transportation options		
Increase bike/walking trails		

Toward the end of the workshop, a representative from each table identified the major themes upon which everyone was able to agree. Some of the more common themes were similar to the most common individual comments and included:

- Hold developers accountable for what is proposed and approved
- Expand Purchase/Transfer of Development Rights
- Do not change A-1 zoning
- Roads and infrastructure improvements needed
- Encourage mixed-use developments in urban areas
- Need to attract/incentivize better commercial opportunities in USA/TGA
- Come up with a proffer or fee for builders/developers to help offset infrastructure costs
- Make it easier to develop where the Comp Plan call for it
- Provide sidewalks/bikeways
- Water availability and quality concerns
- Protect property owner rights

ONLINE COMMENTS

Residents had the opportunity to participate by submitting comments on an online forum. The 39 comments that were received are included in the appendices. The most frequent themes found within those comments include:

- Sequester or stop growth as much as possible within the County, and support of downzoning
- Support infrastructure investment within Stafford, generally at the cost of the developer

Reference: **Stafford Healthy Growth Initiative – Community Outreach Report**

OBSERVATIONS

A broad spectrum of comments was received during this public engagement process. As might be expected, certain “themes” arose from the input received that seemed to be primarily drawn from the knowledge, interests and perspectives participants brought to the meetings. But for some, particularly those attending the public meetings, what they learned from the presentation and other participants raised good questions and seemed to broaden their thinking about possible growth management strategies. An initial general observation is whatever initiatives might be pursued as a result of this process should be accompanied by robust public education and engagement. This process seemed to create some momentum that can be built on and potentially improve the public’s trust in and ultimate support of the initiatives.

Primary factors contributing to Stafford's growth challenges identified during the process were its proximity to the continuously growing DC metro employment centers, access to that area via I-95 (with express toll lanes) and commuter rail, good schools, a safe environment, comparatively less expensive land for development and comparatively more affordable larger homes available in Stafford, particularly in its Rural Areas. Some of these factors are out of Stafford’s control, but are the realities that will continue to challenge growth management efforts. Participants cited such issues as traffic and congestion, overcrowded schools and school buses, and the general inability of infrastructure and services to keep up with growth as extreme frustrations. The second general observation is that any future initiatives will be judged by the public based on how these issues are addressed.

A final general observation is that there were several other cross-cutting “themes” that arose from the public process not particular to the Targeted Growth Areas or the Rural Areas:

- Request for concurrency of infrastructure improvements with land development - growth should pay for itself. The proffer system for rezoning could be reinstituted in its more generally applicable form or a comprehensive impact fee system could be put in place that pays for public facilities. Either system depends on the appropriate state enabling legislation to be fully enacted.
- Recommendation to expand the Transfer of Development Rights program to more comprehensively include the Rural Areas as sending areas and the entire TGAs as receiving areas.
- Preference to incentivize rather than penalize. Property rights are important, and initiatives should encourage and better enable property owners and developers to accomplish the vision and goals of the Comprehensive Plan.

Finally, there were observations particular to the TGAs and Rural Areas that arose from the public process.

- Incentivize growth in the TGAs:
 - There is a history of some TGA projects that have never come to fruition or failed to deliver on the expectations/desires of the community, so, when combined with their daily experiences with issues like traffic, there is some skepticism about the potential of the TGAs.
 - A greater variety of retail/commercial services are important to the success of the TGAs.
 - There is not a universal understanding/agreement as to how more dense, mixed-use urban “placemaking” could be the solution for successful TGAs, but there is general acknowledgement that with good planning, this form could have potential based on its prevalence in other areas. There is agreement that TGAs need enhanced infrastructure and services that provide connectivity, support urban development and provide alternatives to the

Reference: **Stafford Healthy Growth Initiative – Community Outreach Report**

- automobile, including sidewalks, bikeways, public transportation. More amenities that support the TGAs, such as parks and libraries, are important.
- Particularly from the builder/developer perspective, a more streamlined rezoning and permitting process and public/private solutions are important to incentivizing growth in the TGAs.
- Evaluate zoning outside areas served by water and sewer to maintain the rural character of the County:
 - Agriculture is no longer a primary activity in the County. The rural land's greatest financial value is its development potential, rather than agricultural activities. Nevertheless, for some there is also a significant family heritage and a sense of stewardship in their land and a preference to see the value of their land realized in alternative ways: clustering that is respectful of the land's important natural resources, purchase of development rights or transfer of development rights.
 - Local homebuilders have gravitated to the Rural Areas because economies of scale make it hard to compete with the national homebuilders in the TGAs - with the challenges of rezoning/project approvals in the TGAs its generally easier, faster, and/or less expensive to build in the Rural Areas and there has been a ready buyers' market there. These builders would prefer to cluster, which is less costly and potentially more sensitive to rural natural resources if done right but are very limited in the ability to do so since the area available for clustering was significantly scaled back by the County. Builders and landowners would be receptive to reconstituted clustering provisions that would be more sensitive to natural resources and available over the entire Rural Area.
 - For some resource protection interests clustering in any form is viewed as escalating the loss of rural natural resources/character and impacts to the Rural Area (traffic, conflicts with ag enterprises, water resource impacts, increased demand for public services potentially including water and sewer) due to the resultant development cost savings and market demand. They recognize the value of rural land is in its marketability for residential development and prefer programs that would allow rural landowners to keep their land out of development such as agri-business/agri-tourism assistance, greater funding of purchase of development rights, and more comprehensive transfer of development rights. They also see great importance in better enabling urban placemaking as an alternative to rural development by prioritizing the Targeted Growth Areas for more proactive planning, zoning and investment in public infrastructure and services there.
 - While there is not total consensus regarding changing the A-1 zoning, the very strong sentiment expressed is not to downzone.
 - While there is not a consensus regarding clustering, the very strong sentiment expressed is to reconstitute the clustering provisions with greater emphasis on preserving the natural/environmental/agricultural resources outside of the cluster and avoiding conflicts between the clusters and agricultural activities.
 - Enhanced and more proactive agri-business/agri-tourism programs, proactive support of easement donations and increased commitment to purchase of development rights have more general support.

Reference: **Stafford Healthy Growth Initiative – Community Outreach Report**

APPENDICES

ONE-ON-ONE INTERVIEWS

ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSIONS

APRIL 22ND PUBLIC MEETING – INDIVIDUAL AND COLLECTIVE RESPONSES

APRIL 23RD PUBLIC MEETING – INDIVIDUAL AND COLLECTIVE RESPONSES

HEALTHY GROWTH PRESENTATION

ONLINE COMMENTS ON HEALTHY GROWTH

APPENDIX A: ONE-ON-ONE INTERVIEWS

STAFFORD COUNTY INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWS

Monday, April 8, 2019

Themes/Comments that were consistent across interviews:

- Consistent concern that it is too difficult to achieve rezoning in the USA
- Consistent theme that A-1 should NOT change
 - (“Give incentives, don’t rob them”)
 - Don’t punish a small number of property owners
 - Don’t change the rules mid-inning
- Difficult for local developers to compete with National companies
- Strong advocacy for property rights
- Mixed-message on Cluster development
- Luke-warm responses on walkable, connected, mixed-use development
- Schools
 - If you put more kids in USA, can you expand schools
 - “My daughter rides on the floor of the bus”
- Roads/infrastructure

8:30AM Residential Builders

We see this as an effort to downzone, which we consider negative

Keep the rural character. Best tool is to focus on cluster development. But they changed the ordinance to 50% from previously 100% - this was a big negative – lack of clustering contributes to fragmentation of rural land.

We did excellent cluster development. Put in trails. 117 acre put 50% in rural. Almost sold out in two years. Put in 36 trails. Everything on the outside 633 Joshua. We were already approved.

Some people like 3 acres lot, some people like the 1.5 acre lots. Cluster ordinance put in place 5-7 years ago. It was working perfectly from our perspective. We invited the board out to come. Not one individual came. Need to find out the reasons for why they reduced the area for cluster development.

A little reason is about the school. But I live in USA and right now my daughter is sitting on the floor of the bus. We don’t have enough services in the USA.

As developers, we are willing to share our ‘wealth’ with the County. If the problem is roads or schools, why can’t we raise tax rates? That seems like the real issue. If they can raise rates to \$110 from \$103, then maybe that is the solution. This county is in the top 10% for wealth. I think there are intelligent ways to build schools and roads. Increase the transportation impact fee. Let’s redo this. It should go up. All the arteries are restricted. We don’t have a school proffer. There is a strong push to redo the transportation impact fee. In lieu of proffers.

There has not been a rezoning in Stafford County for years – since all rezonings are being denied, growth moves to by-right, most of which is in the rural area. They keep turning down zone changes inside the

Service zone (Cardinals Meadow). The trend is toward the outskirts because you can't rezone urban service areas. The reason is that neighbors 'don't want any more development.'

Development is actually down over the last few years. We have a newsletter. The numbers are not trending in the direction the County has said, and county permits are going down. The word on the street and the word in the reports is very different.

84% of the building permits are in the USA and 16% is in the rural for the last 3 years.

Our business has never been affected by growth. We do about 50 houses/year. I would say the growth has been steady since 2010.

What is the biggest/most popular housing type? We only do single family.

There are a couple big PUDs, but these are owned by the national builders. They are developing. You can't win when you compete against the nationals.

There are a lot of approved lots, but they are in the PUDS. Anything new would require a rezoning. Can this be one of the tools? Proactively rezone areas to support new development

We independent builders realize that the roads are too small. We can help/support the development of new roads, bigger roads

No support for rural enterprises getting approved - County denies wedding venues. Woman bought 20-acre property. It should have been ok. But Board voted her down.

What would make USA more attractive? Wider streets, better, bigger schools. Nice homes. Fire and safety.

Don't know if people want better walkable places.

I don't know why it's so cheap to live here? \$1 tax rate, is that reasonable? Why not \$1.20? \$1.30?

They have a beautiful plan to redevelop Courthouse area into mixed-use. But they can't attract a developer. The anti-growth mentality scares them away.

3 to 6-acre downzoning would be really bad. 3 to 10 acres would be a devastating blow. If 5 acre lots, property values would go down 50%. This would be major hit to tax revenues.

Me and other small developers are the demand. People don't buy 100-acre parcels. I've done my analysis on streets, infrastructure

600-700 families will bear the burden of a down zoning of A-1.

Cluster is so much cheaper from a developer's perspective. 100 acres gives you 30 lots. It's half the amount of road. We can charge less for the homes in cluster and still make the profit we need to.

A typical road costs \$50K per 3 acre lot (become state road). 1.5-acre lot costs \$30K per lot.

Staff is over-worked and underpaid.

9:45 – 10:45AM: Private Company for Residential Building

Largest local builder. We do stick to being homebuilders. We tried being developers in the early 2000s and got caught in the recession. Because of the capital financing needs, etc. For us to maintain an adequate amount of sites.

We do single family detached. We build about 30% of the homes in rural areas.

We would love to build in the USA, would love to build townhomes and multifamily. But it's too risky. We love sewer and water lots, but we get outbid by larger national developers for these sites.

We are in Embry Mill. It's our least profitable area. But you can get sales there. It's not very risky. We do some in Prince William and Stafford, we do septic.

We think we do it well. Atlantic Builders are extremely invested in the community, but community is getting harder to do business in. From an emotional side, this whole process really hurts us. It may not be home for us 3 years down the road.

I was president of the Builders Association.

How they went about getting rid of cluster development and not honoring deals in place was not right. Reversal of that policy was significant

I just think clustering is a very smart way to build. I felt like there could have been a better middle-ground. But as far as benefits all around, clustering.

It's required by Assembly to do clustering in high growth areas. Compared to by right/3 acres, clustering is WAY better. It allows from a developers perspective flexibility because you can use the best land.

Average sales price is \$500K/3k SF above grade.

When Stafford rolled out their clustering, I think they made some mistakes that might not have been the best practice. Trying to squeeze onto 1-acre lot was a challenge.

Change in proffer legislation has led to no rezonings, transferred demand to by right, much of it in rural areas, reducing cluster eligible areas has driven up cost of rural lots

Our purchasers are 70% military/or related – big price sensitivity. They come here for the value. They have very strict incomes coming from the govt. so a \$3k increase could have a huge impact. You'll ask for a \$5K deposit on a \$500K house. That is one of the sensitivities in our market. Profit margins are lower by about 4-5 points here. There's a lot of demand, but you don't get the appreciation here.

In the rural areas, with all the demand we have, we still don't have that much demand.

Our customer is much more likely to drive an F150 than a Prius – different market segments, focus on affordability.

Embry Mill is more about \$400K/2,400SF. 2-income professional families, 35-40 age group. Our buyers in the rural area are more diverse but probably about 45 average with kids looking for high school. Often military relocations. 30-40% might be value-seeking buyers.

80% of well and septic are done by local builders. We don't have the deep pockets required for the rezoning. It's a year just to go through the rezoning. Then another 10 months of permitting before turning dirt. You don't know what proffers are going to cost. If you make a mistake as a local builder, you can be devastated.

We'd still be outbid by national builders even if zoning in USA was revised. They can build 10-15% less than we do. So, they can outbid us on lots. And they play with Wall Street money. We put our houses up as collateral.

Overall, I do think the USA is more attractive to 75-80% of homebuyers. Need more dollars for public facilities/infrastructure – increase impact fees, return to clustering, make USA development quicker and easier to get through

Expanded use of TDR may reduce impact on rural areas, but probably most benefits national builders and takes opportunities away from local builders

Re: rural character, think it mostly focuses on what people can see, not agribusiness or tourism

Our company has been instrumental in bringing high speed internet to (we don't purchase properties that don't).

There are on-going discussions about changing the new cluster code. Although recommendations may not be that great.

Need to build trust between development community and elected officials

I live in a cluster community. I think some developers may have taken advantage of the cluster ordinance, but don't throw the baby out with the bathwater.

10:00AM (by phone): Land Use Attorney

Stafford is a tough place right now. It's hard to get anything rezoned.

They didn't grow at all during the recession.

Stafford has seen most of it's growth by by-right in rural areas. From my perspective most has NOT been in the USA, at least not with my projects.

I think there has only been one new multi-family approved in the last 10 years. They only had 288 units.

I've got a 400 mix of singles and towns. Been a year. And various other 300+ in the queue. George Washington Village, in a TGA

We've had a swing from moderate smart growth, to switching back to an anti-growth perspective.

Politically, it's a struggle. School Board and Board of Supervisors have not gotten along. And that's before we even get into the transportation issues. Because the county has not invested in the infrastructure in the last 10 years.

Every survey by residents call for office space, restaurants, amenities, etc.

My family has been in Stafford County since the 1700s. Not blaming anyone, but when you say “no new taxes,” nothing happens.

Most of the NYMBY is coming from the politicians, not the community. On one multi-family, mixed-use project, we had full support from the community, the planners, etc. Not the board

I’ve got Jackson Village (2,007 units with 300k commercial) just south of the 126 interchange. Alexander Crossing (2,000+ with 1.2 million commercial) in Spotsylvania. Near Cox’s Corner.

Stafford doesn’t have anything like this. It has been pending because of issues with Developers. But even this was opposed by politicians. It’s going to be a challenge building this. It’s piecemeal. Will be difficult to combine parcels. Need incentives by County. I like what they are doing right now. It’s attracting my folks. But every time we go to the county, they say “we’d like to see it somewhere else.”

Reality is that it’s not conducive/friendly to development. You can talk to industrial folks, and they say they are having a hard

10:00AM large property owner and preservation advocate

Huge problem with direction from the General Assembly and Dillon Rule, significantly limits Stafford’s ability to deal with growth management issues

Development community spearheaded changes in clustering legislation and subsequent impacts to open space

Until the statute is changed, Comp Plan changes will not make much difference – clustering provides a financial incentive to build outside the USA, need to build the case to bring to Richmond to change the 40% clustering requirement

A-1 cluster concept – 40% A-1 cluster in perpetuity across the county – noble effort but ultimately can’t change things with Dillon Rule in effect

There is a natural propensity to grow due to Stafford’s location and cost of housing, clustering has further enabled this to happen – additional factors are cost of living, amenities, safety, stable economy

Losing rural character with fragmentation, traffic, McMansions – negative impact on bucolic settings, natural habitat and ecosystems including water, traffic, waste management, schools and public safety demands

Why are we permitting sprawl – vacancy rates in commercial areas, significant empty storefronts – creating churn that leads to wasted land

Focus on financial compensation to encourage rural preservation – easements, PDRs, TDRs, - do a comprehensive review of TDR and PDR, expand boundaries of TDR and add more funding to PDR – fund programs through development related activity not reliant just on general fund (maybe a two tier permit cost structure than makes it cheaper to build in the growth areas)

Create parity in cost of housing between Stafford County and other areas of northern Virginia, create financial motivations to shift density allowances to the USA

Enforce a hard line for the extent of public water and sewer – cluster development invite the potential expansion of water and sewer into rural areas due to potential failure of well/septic on clustered lots

Make USAs attractive options – design with vibrant centers, sense of place, public spaces, multi modal transportation, walkability, improved infrastructure

Focus on transportation hubs as priority mixed use locations

11:00AM – 12:00PM - large property owner

We live on the farm that my husband was born on. But we farm other land (which will likely be taken for a subdivision). One of the major problems is that there is not enough farmland. Land use taxation is big. We have a lot of properties to keep them.

Traffic is also big. Try to move a tractor on Poplar Road.

The other big thing is that there is no water. We are on wells. Sooner or later we are all going to have a problem. The idea of shared septic systems, which we've heard rumors about. That's crazy.

The roads have no shoulders. When you are pulling any kind of equipment, it's very hard for the commuter traffic to get out of the way.

We've been here 44 years. Mike will say the change happened when 95 came through. Also, when Quantico came in and took over.

Our street upgraded in 1988. But it's been really bad since the turn of the century. We were insulated from the recession because of all the govt jobs. As much as I fuss about encroachment, I'm also a land rights proponent. I feel that the next generation has every right to make as much profit as they can.

I was on the PDR committee for 10 years. One of the problems we had is that we didn't have a funding source. Too little too late. There have been some important tracts saved. Why bother applying for a PDR if they always go to the same family.

For us, the cluster development was a blessing when it went away. While it was initiated with good intention, all they did was preserve the cruddy land and put the houses very close together. You can't use the 'open' land for farming. It's not even usable for the people who live there.

Courthouse Road is where development should be. But the powers that be are not approving them. Let's build where the plan says to build.

We are perceived as a county with a beautiful scenic nature. And it IS, for now.

There are more people in the schools now. I have no idea what to do except encourage growth where there is sewer and water.

I would not increase to 5 acres. I would increase PDR funding to aggressively save some of the land.

Along Poplar Rd (one fronts on Hartwood), the three are contiguous and maybe a 1,000 acres. When these 'fall,' the streets can't take the pressure.

As farmers, we have created an actual market doing direct sales to new residents. Most farmers though are trying to do the old-fashioned way.

No one wants to lose the ability to sell the land if and when the time comes.

Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) too much competition for Purchase of Development Rights (PDR)

Should be cheaper to develop (fees) in USA. These could be done easily.

Transportation, and community (placemaking). Create a sense of 'center' of place.

Soil and Water Conservation District

Long experience with Farm Credit, cooperative extension service, member of PDR committee

PDR is underfunded, land in ad reduces demand for public services, currently a list of 13 interested in PDR but only dollars for 4

Farm ownership circumstances make farmland conversion more possible – demand has really changed the value

Aging population of farmers looking to retire creating succession issues that make farmland a prime target

Developers have land in inventory in rural area that will be developed (some of it currently being farmed) – already developable under current regulations, by right and can't be stopped

Downzoning would cause a great deal of negativity

Reduction of cluster area caused great backlash in the community - ag owners complained about loss of property rights and value – cluster development advantages the developer (cheaper), open areas often not usable for ag or anything else, just the leftover area, creates water and waste concerns

Rural character defined as heritage of working the land, generating income through multiple generations, beef cattle, horses, crops, viewshed – there is no significant infrastructure to support agriculture in Stafford

Desired urban area amenities include sidewalks, town center, increased road capacities, walkability/mixed use – need intentional investment and to address impacts in existing neighborhoods – look at history of downtown Fredericksburg

VRE could be a focal point to attract development

Urban project examples – West Broad Village in Richmond, project on Staples Mills Road in Richmond.

1:00-2:00pm Farmer

We've been here forever. I own the farm now from my Great Grandfather from 1850. We've had another farm from 1919. Beef cattle, hay mostly, corn. I was a hay broker. And I still sell.

I served on an ad hoc committee to write the 1980s Comp Plan. I served on the utility commission for 10 years in the late 90s and early 2000. I've been on this Urban Service thing for 10 years. I know there's been some discussion about Cluster Development. I understand cluster, and I understand what the concerns are. I've lost three farms that I've rented in the last 3-4 years. I've farmed those lands for 30 years. All three became clusters. The developer put the houses in the fields and left the woods. I understand that, and I'm not saying that's wrong. Because the only thing you are doing is making larger lots and not helping open space. But with 5 acres, you're just going to have big messes.

One was 24 acres of GOOD farmland. It went for development. I inquired about buying it. When I knew 3 acres lot is what I was dealing with and knowing the wood land had drawback. It knocked me out of it. I was competing with developers. He paid \$600somehting. When he came in, he Clustered it. Let all the wood and rough terrain. Cut a road in and simple cul-de-sac on level ground. I can't compete with it. I probably could have competed if it couldn't be clustered. I've farmed that for 30 years. I'm ready to back up. But if I was a younger person, I wouldn't be able to have done it.

But I'm not into 5 acres. That'll just eat up more land. Plus, it won't look nice. None of these do me any good. I couldn't farm 5 acres. With that said, I know

[Vernon described 116-acre property he owns TGA.] I've been trying to sell since 2005. We have developer interest. But no one is going to wait 2 years to get ANYTHING done.

I think they are not approving because the large lot projects because they don't have the infrastructure in place. Then the schools.

My sons bought a farm in PA, but they can't make a living there. But they can make money here selling straw for erosion control.

Can you do a cluster development that preserves farmland for renting?

2:15 – 3:15PM Ag Industry/Farmer

Citizen of Stafford. Life-long resident family goes back to 1748. Very fond of Stafford County. Lived all around the world. Grew up on a farm. Own 18-acre and 80-acre properties. One is cattle. Other is local farmers market guy. The small one we've had for a long time. The other 80 acres since 1950s.

I hear some people say they want no new growth. But that caps property taxes.

I watched the county meeting that took place on the cluster development. I don't have a stake in it. What surprised me was the hostility of the Board to the residents speaking out. It seemed in places where there was a general disrespect. Maybe we should watch it.

There seems to be hostility from the Supervisors about the development in general. My understanding was that when they changed the cluster rules, they did not grandfather some of the people mid-way through. That definitely does not seem fair.

If you think of the economics of it. The pure math of it.... For many of the old farmers, the land is their 401K. When you take some folks, whose land is their retirement, that's not fair. A nursing home costs 8-10K a month. It's all private pay. When you change the rules, it's a big deal. I've never met a farmer who wants to sell their land. And I know most of the farmers here.

The thing we need to remember is that that beautiful green rolling hill is owned by someone else.

So, if you want to incent people to invest in USA, why 'punish' land owners in RA.

What about mixed-use development?

We do not have enough **affordable housing**. The builders are not generating demand. The demand is already here. And it is cheaper here. So, they come here. If we were able to reduce fees or whatever it costs to build a home that is not hard construction costs. If you could reduce in the USA so that it is cheaper. The other challenge is that Stafford has some of the **best schools** in the country. But because it's getting expensive to live here, they do one of two things. They go up North to Prince William/Fairfax where housing is cheaper.

There is a huge demographic shift is the aging of the population. Baby boomers changed everything. Now they are aging out and looking for cheaper homes, etc. The Nation missed this 10 years ago. Huge pressure on assisted living, funeral homes, etc. Creating housing that supports the aging bubble would be great.

Proffer was mandatory but they changed the rule. So now in this last session legislation changed so proffers are not illegal. But they can be offered and accepted. Just allow proffers in USA.

Small homes for senior housing. There's going to be a huge demand for these.

Other demographics is millennials. 85 million make up the millennials. The millennial is slightly larger than the Baby Boomers.

Gartner, that's who I work with. IT is stock ticker. We moved across the river to Arlington. All young career driven employees. They hated it before it got cool. Now they love it.

Part of it is a vision thing. Most of the people in the planning office have no vision.

Focus on incenting and not robbing.

You can't change the rules mid-game.

Find the force and energy and run with that. Focus on millennials and boomers.

If you go to 5 acres, only millionaires will be able to live here. We will force all the fire fighters and teachers out.

3:30 – 4:30PM NoVa Conservation Trust

Bit of a complex background in Stafford. We've owned our farm since the 1950s. I teach international relations at the University. When I came back, I couldn't help but notice the development. Became involved in the conservation.

The Northern Virginia Conservation Trust (we own part of Crows Nest), I've been on the board for 6-7 years.

It's very hard to contact farmers and landowners. I've been interviewing those who have 20 or more acres. I've interviewed 50+ landowners. Often these conversations are emotional.

20acre owners are key for PDR

I've been able to interview those not previously involved – strong belief in by right that protects economic value of property.

Most people I've spoken to are interested in preserving the rural character. We assume many of the people who move here are because it's cheaper and they like character. People like the farms, etc. Despite our differences, everyone can get behind preserving rural spaces.

Some who moved here in the 80s are now moving to more rural areas

Old timers do not feel like elected Board Members represent them – “they are not from here”.

Important for the county to team with other entities for trust/credibility – need regular, honest conversation

Cultural argument about by right is at the root of the issue – can conservation initiatives be aligned with by right

TDR issues – receiving areas not ready to take new rights, owners are feeling significant financial pressure to make sure they can get value out of their property – any decisions need to be discussed and made with multiple generations at the same time

These owners are extremely conscious of their financial needs.

It's helpful to have cross-generational conversations about the land.

“Developers are just waiting you out.”

The Land Trust I've been involved with is doing and MOU with Stafford

A lot of people feel like they are not being communicated to.

Need to invest in higher level of county services for urban areas – “high touch” opportunities with urban residents

APPENDIX B: ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSIONS

Round Table Session 1 (10:00-11:30AM)

Participants

Stacey Bertotti

Lynne Conroe

Clay Croker

Tim Hall

John Harris

Bryan Hofmann

Pete Hummes

Marty McClevey

Bettina McWhirt (and father)

Zeke Moore

Karla Pray

Jerry Silver

Frequent Themes:

- Create fair alternative financial resources
 - Encourage public/private solutions
- Cluster development can work, but it needs to be fixed/done correctly
- Streamline the development process in the TGA
- If we are serious about focusing on the TGA, we need to invest in infrastructure
- TDR can be free market as well
- Education/outreach to land owners, developers, etc.

Q1: Is there anything from the presentation that resonates with you?

For water and sewer, we should fix what is already broken

Sewer has failed in Falls Run, resulting in millions of gallons of waste falling into the river. This is being monitored by the water conservation district.

How do we increase rural area without rezoning? (clarified the numbers).

The big driver in this is density. And Stafford has not been big on density, even in the growth area. It's not how dense it is, it should be how the form/quality, etc. makes it a great thing.

The county should incentivize projects in TGAs. Increasing your ability to go up will help development here and takes pressure off other places, and maintains previous areas.

The comp plan has been in place since the 1960s (with updates). But that is on a five-year cycle. This conversation is outside of that cycle. Why are we having this conversation now? The Board is concerned with this because of infrastructure, schools, police, etc. building schools outside of the USA. But we realize because of our geography, Stafford is going to grow. Per the comp plan, "these are the rules we are going to live by." So why is the development occurring in Rural. I think it has a lot to do with the cluster situation. Why aren't we having this discussion if the General Assembly is already making decisions for us? Agriculture is an economic business. But so is development. How do we find the balance?

One speaker has a 700-acre family farm that they have owned for decades. About 10 years ago, they decided to pursue ecological restoration process. This was done under the rules of the time with cluster development. The County pulled the rug out from underneath them. The comment to the county is this: you can't keep moving the goal post. As land owners, we are also investors. The county is going to end up shooting themselves in the foot. The 'demons' of the developers are going to end up with all the land because land owners will sell if economics don't work. There are millions of dollars going into the restoration project. Speaker felt that changed regulations are not fair when they have been playing by the rules.

In the 90s, there was a push about trying to pursue the downzoning, and there was a lot of backlash. People moved.

Lenders are looking for consistency in the marketplace.

Q2: What factors are contributing to the greater than desired amount of development in the rural areas?

Lenders are constantly reacting to the rules that are in place and/or as they change. We are looking for certainty and consistency. You can't ignore where we are and the forces that are creating development. What we've seen as successful, is that it's all about location. Quantico brings jobs, and value to homeowners in the area.

Overcrowding of the schools is a major issue. We should put a moratorium in place on building. We can't keep building if we are not fixing the current problems with schools, infrastructure. Developers should contribute to the schools and other infrastructure. I've been here 12 years. I've witnessed major problems in Stafford County.

Wayne clarified that per the State, you cannot put a moratorium on building houses. Just a factor that we need to consider.

I think what's pushing this is public desire. How many people would prefer 3 acres over 10K SF lot? I know I prefer that. People in this market prefer larger land sites.

It is also the fact that it's really hard to develop in the TGA. Doesn't like to use the easy for any project, but how about less difficult? Suggests that currently, development outside the USA is a less difficult path.

It is simple economics. "Rural character doesn't pay the bills." Rural land in central Illinois sells for \$10K because they can make money on farming. It sells for \$10K an acre in Stafford county because that's what it's worth from a housing perspective. It's not worth that much as a farm. It's just simple: the land is more valuable with a house on it. Housing is seen as highest and best use both from a pure land value perspective, and from a tax perspective.

The cost of water and sewer is not borne by rural development. The ops to use density with clusters. There are simply financial/economic incentives to develop in rural areas. But the costs in the long term from schools is higher.

Q3: From your experience and perspective, what initiatives would incentivize and encourage the quality of life for citizens in the Targeted Growth Areas consistent with the desired urban form?

Often lots are cleared for potential developments (Trader Joes, Whole Foods, Entertainment), but they never come. We need this type of commercial developments. We are not keeping our money here in the county. We are the 8th richest county in the US. Why don't we have dining, shopping, and entertainment options?

I'd like to see consistent land use so that we can still keep the farm. Keep your hands off the land use program. We are not a burden on the county by having our land. There should be incentives to owners to keep their land rural/agricultural, so farmers don't feel they have to sell to pay taxes.

One of the county examples was about density bonuses. That could work here. If you are going to try to get good retail here, you need to support larger development.

We need to make this place less auto-focused and improve transportation, bike infrastructure from residences to shopping areas, etc.

I'd like to know why the TDR doesn't work. In Montgomery MD, they have the best TDR in the country. Why can't we emulate that here?

One difference between the PDR and the TDR is the cost. With PDR the county is paying for it. With the TDR, the money comes from development community. This is a vehicle in which we can preserve property and be self-financing. We do not have a county-wide TDR yet, but we should. Perhaps the current sending and receiving areas are not sufficiently broad; or, perhaps the incentives are not for enough units to make development in the USAs worthwhile.

In Fauquier, there are other conservancy and land trusts that are more active. Why aren't they here? Are we talking to them? (need to identify specifically which entities doing this). There are tools for land banking, agricultural easement purchase options, etc. These help to subsidize limited resources of PDR funding. A lot comes down to educating people on the tools available.

We need to streamline development in TGAs.

Q4: From your experience and perspective, what zoning and rural preservation initiatives could move us toward the desired character in the rural areas as called for in the Comprehensive Plan?

There is potential for improvements to the cluster development rules. When you are doing cluster development, there are often geometry constraints. If I have a piece of land, sometimes it doesn't fit. So

what it leads to is that you end up mass grading. Flexibility in geometry to fit lots to terrain would be helpful rather than being constrained to geometric limitations of the laws.

There is an issue with driveways in A1 clusters. This should be fixed to encourage the “right kind” of growth.

Question back: What do we mean by the rural area (Lee answered that per the comp plan):

So the comp plan specifically says discourage growth? Yes (many agreed).

No one wants to discourage growth. It’s about the right growth.

So right next to us: 300 acres so 3/acre lots at \$30K. So, the whole thing gets eaten up. I think the cluster thing is broken right now, but it could be fixed. My idea of rural is open fields. So maybe cluster can be improved to preserve character.

My pet peeve is that the By Right does destroy the character. But also, the commuters destroy the roads. Farming and residential uses are not compatible.

They bought it like it was, then they start hollering about the roads. Because they know they can get it.

We have to look at and provide alternative financial resources to sell or transfer rights that are focused on Ag communities.

No one wants to sell for housing. But there needs to be a fair financial alternative. The cost of housing here is substantially less (\$50K less on average)

If you look at downzoning, you are going to penalize large property owners.

We were downzoned when the county took away the cluster development

ROUNDTABLE SESSION 2 (1:30 – 3:00pm)

Participants

Mike Rhodes. In Stafford since 2002. Served

Tom Cropp: Lived here all my life; planning

Alex McCallister

Donn Hall GC lived here all my life

Brad Johnson Realtor/retired

Jo Knight Realtor

Frequent Themes:

- Take actions for recommendations from throughout the Comp Plan
- County should focus infrastructure improvements to TGA and other potential priority areas

- There is a recognition that this “is not easy”
- Focus on walkable, mixed-use development
 - Inter-parcel access
 - Connected sidewalks
- Focus School/Infrastructure improvements to TGA
- Get cluster development right
- Recognize that conflicts do exist between farming and residential development
- Recognize the reality that the growth is not going to stop
- Overall, focus on the USA

Q1: Is there anything from the presentation that resonates with you?

I expected it. This happens every time a new set of Board of Supervisors come in. The votes used to come from the rural areas. Now they come from the USA. The County is penny-wise and dollar-crazy. We are blessed. We have this corridor that connects us to incredible jobs. I've seen so many things that we can do better. They say we can't afford it, but how can we afford not to? We need to focus on commercial. It's crazy that we are not putting utilities underground. We used to. Now they say it's too expensive.

Lot's of people/developers I speak to want to work in Stafford, but they are afraid to. It's unpredictable here. That's no good.

I personally think that, done the right way, cluster development is the best thing we have. There have been a few bad examples, but overall this is the way to go.

We got rid of the central drain fields, but they do just fine. It allowed us to build on the waterfront, which provides more tax revenue.

It seems like we have this conversation when the economy does well. And if we do downzone, everyone is going to sell their land now...creating a false boom.

It's hard to keep the rural character of the community already. Cars going 60mph on back roads during commuting times. I don't know what you can do about this. We went through a period when State said we couldn't do proffers. When that happened, County didn't do any rezoning. So where else are they going to go?

The reality is that it's never going to stop. We've always kicked the can down the road. That's not going to work. Accepting that we have to accept...I'm dismissive of the TGA, but I am focused on the USA. With the way the state is structured and what it allows local govt to do, we are limited. We just have to take the few tools that we have. If you want to discourage, your can downzone. But that's not popular we've tried it before and never got anywhere. Then you have the encouragement side. We have a few tools there., and that's what we've got to do, where we need to focus on. Support density here. We have to separate the fact that managing growth is not accepting growth. All we are doing is acknowledging growth and work with the few tools we have.

We need to improve the infrastructure WHERE we want the growth to go.

The biggest thing we can do are schools and roads where we want the growth to go.

What resonated with me is that there needs to be more discussion about infrastructure. Maybe a timetable would be helpful.

Second, on the TGA, is there a target of the 80% in the TGAs?

Well if you want density, you need to go with multi-family. And some Supervisors are dead set against that.

Q2: What factors are contributing to the greater than desired amount of development in the rural areas?

Right off the bat, a lot of people don't want to live in urban areas. This is what they are escaping in Northern Virginia

I saw changes 20 years ago in codes and permitting. But across the board, we hear from buyers that they want 3 acres, 1 acres, sometimes more than 3 acres.

It's a tough thing about following the comp plan. In the last four months, I'm getting lots more calls about "should I sell now? Are they going to Down zone?"

Fact is, the property owners are the ones who are going to get hurt. And it won't be fair to the local builders. They can't compete with the Nationals in the USA.

We are not the easy County. I think that applies to some more simple things. And I'm talking about in the TGA. If we are serious about developing here, make it easier.

I experienced it in Spotsylvania. When they went to 5 and then to 10, it stopped development altogether. But they also are ok with rezoning for the right project. But that doesn't solve the problems with the roads. And in Prince William

I used to ask people why they moved to Stafford. Usually they say schools. Other thing is people can afford it.

Q3: From your experience and perspective, what initiatives would incentivize and encourage the quality of life for citizens in the Targeted Growth Areas consistent with the desired urban form:

One of the things is by encouraging it through our zoning laws. Make utility access easier. Getting it in place now. I'm speaking of commercial. A medium size commercial developer. You don't know how many issues I have with utilities and getting it there.

Need to better coordinate infrastructure/utilities to encourage development. If it costs two million to bury utilities, we should do it.

In a perfect world, you would put the roads and infrastructure in place first

Our 'urban' is 'lite,' but it's the same. Our sidewalks don't connect. If I had just the basic road infrastructure, we could connect. Kids could actually ride their bikes (which they can't right now)

We should apply for grants to get some of the biking, pedestrians, etc. in.

Some things don't seem to be well thought out.

Court House project hasn't come about. My son lives in Richmond. He walks his daughter to school, walks to work, to restaurants. I think walkable areas would really help!

There are some tools we already have that we could use more. Expedited reviews, reduced fee. The county is not utilizing economic development agency.

The problem is that the National developers just come in here and take over. That kills the local developer. Helping them is the wrong thing to do. And they are going to build townhouses. That's the worst thing for schools, for crime...etc.

Q4: From your experience and perspective, what zoning and rural preservation initiatives could move us toward the desired character in the rural areas as called for in the Comprehensive Plan?

We need to expand the TDR across the County. Broader area. This is an incentive.

I think if you do cluster development in the right manner, that will be the best option. Tuck it away so you almost can't see it.

We are not really a rural county anymore. The cluster does really help. It's the smartest development

The concept of cluster development is great. The reality though...The ridge line is along the road. That's the part that perks. But you create conflicts with farmers. So then the farm sells.

It's just the broader expansion of the TDR. Rezoning? You only have a couple of tools. More importantly, what seems most likely is that it will be a combination of promoting and preserving. There is no one panacea. Nothing is going to happen fast. The County must do its part. Commit to the areas they are focused on.

The money we get from VDOT will NEVER provide enough funds. County must commit to this, and they need to focus in USA.

APPENDIX C: APRIL 22ND PUBLIC MEETING – INDIVIDUAL AND COLLECTIVE RESPONSES

Table Discussions 04/22/19 – Major Themes

Table 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limit growth – push growth south of the county • Increase minimum lot size in rural areas to 5 – 10 acres to limit rural growth • Developers should be required to pay for the water and sewer that will add to a fund for replacement of water/sewer treatment • Require developers to pay for the infrastructure in the urban areas
Table 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A-1 zoning needs to remain unchanged • Proffers are a viable tool and need to be utilized • Provide small business loans/technical assistance for agri-tourism start ups • Support telecommunication infrastructure in rural areas • Consistent quality in schools
Table 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preservation of potable water • Government oversight to prevent builders from overburdening resources (roads, water, electric, trash, internet) • Schools • County needs to hold developers accountable for their promises
Table 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bring in more commercial, not mixed use • Improve transportation infrastructure, increase transportation impact fees • Require enhanced well/groundwater testing prior to allowing development • Hold developers accountable for what they propose and is approved • Not happy with current cluster development projects • Keep Stafford our refuge
Table 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roads and infrastructure improvements needed • Re-evaluate cluster ordinance • Increase fees to developers • Schools should be located where they can accommodate planned growth • Focus on groundwater supply, water resource impacts
Table 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Okay with growth if done properly • Encourage mixed-use developments in urban areas to make them more attractive for residents • Explore increasing impact fees as a way to offset public facility costs rather than changing zoning
Table 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make bicycling accessible, not shared with automobiles • More homes have been built than schools are able to accommodate • Lack of one story ADA compliant housing and parking • Lack of home-school-shopping pedestrian and bicycle routes • Better/bigger parks for children to play in, not just for recreational sports
Table 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to attract/incentivize better commercial opportunity for urban services area

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In rural areas, allow farmers to sell off half their property as a cluster and continue farming the other half • Allow for town center development in urban service area to create a better mix of commercial/residential projects • Come up with a proffer or fee for builders/developers to help offset infrastructure costs • Bring back/alter the cluster ordinance to maintain open space/rural character • Make it more friendly/incentivize building in the urban service area, install infrastructure
Table 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase public transportation, pay attention to affordable housing • Better information/communication with residents • Need urban amenities in addition to all the new residential, more commercial tax base • Concern about gentrification, opportunities for diversity • More focus on Route 17 development • Hard to achieve desired vision when the Board is constantly changing the Comp Plan • Stress on school system • Make it easier to develop where the Comp Plan call for it – create sufficient population density in targeted growth areas to support amenities, provide infrastructure to encourage growth where you want it • Negative impacts of increasing rural residential development on natural resource/water supply
Table 10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Problems with traffic congestion on I-95 and overflow impact on US 1 and even secondary roads – out of area traffic is a particular problem • Provide sidewalks/bikeways where there is new residential development to connect to schools, parks, businesses • Need additional retail • Promote development around commuter rail station • More local employment opportunities – airport is one priority

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April 22 and 23, 2019

Future Growth

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Current Situation – Changing Conditions

Despite a long history in attempts to address concerns about residential growth, changing conditions have impacted our ability to be successful in changing development patterns:

Population has grown 16% since 2010

Acceleration of rural residential development amid economic recovery, contributing to the loss of our rural character

Impacts of the opening of Interstate 95 in the late 1960s

Prime location for commuters to employment centers in Washington DC, Northern Virginia and Richmond as these areas have faced housing price pressures

Current Situation – Where we are Today

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Notes

MIKE SMITH

Opportunities

- Q1. THERE IS NO WAY BE PROGROWTH DUE EMS, TRAFFIC, SCHOOL CONCERNS
- Q2. LIMITED GROWTH, DEVELOPERS NEED TO PAY MORE FOR INFRASTRUCTURE
- Q3. RESTRICT ZONE DOWNGRADING, RURAL MIN 3A/HOUSE - 5A/HOUSE
 - ROADS ARE LIMITED
 - DEVELOPERS NEED TO PAY FOR NEW WATER
 - TREATMENT PLANT ~~NEAR~~ NEAR HARTWOOD SERVES RT-17
 - REAL ESTATE TAXES NEED TO BE REDUCED BY DEVELOPERS NOT INCREASED

Challenges

- STAFFORD COUNTY GEO DOES NOT ALLOW FOR GROWTH
- MORE MAIN ROADS ARE REQUIRED
- FIX TRAFFIC ISSUES! MAINTENANCE FOR 10 YEARS
- INCREASE PROFFERS - DEVELOPERS MAY MORE
- EMS EMS EMS - INCLUDES POLICE
- SCHOOLS SCHOOLS SCHOOLS - SCHOOLS NEED TO BE BUILT BY DEVELOPERS NOT JUST LOW FEE

Other Comments

- WELLS WILL DEplete WATER
- EMS NEEDS BETTER ACCESS
- MORE DEVELOPER FUNDS FOR SCHOOLS NEW, OLD
- ~~FREE~~ FREE CLUSTER DEVELOPMENT
- INCREASE PARK! REC FACILITIES FOR GROWTH AREA

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Opportunities

Keep 3A lots in Rural Area
Expedite zoning applications in Zoning Dept
to make building in USA Area easier.
The present 2 year timetable is not
suitable.

Challenges

Target building in high growth areas

Other Comments

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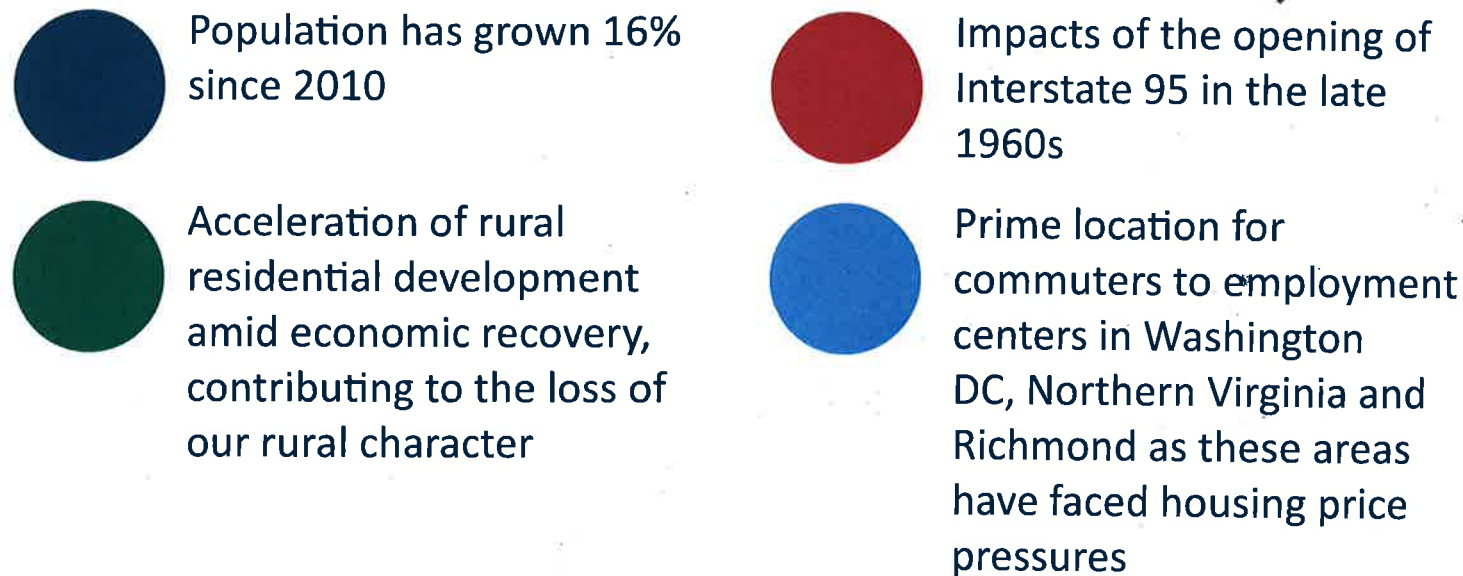
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Opportunities

- #2 - easily accessible employment centers
 - dependable / accessible transportation
 - flexibility in commute options
 - close to large scale recreational area
 - well developed proffer methodology

- #3 - small business loans / Technical Assistance to ^{assist in} start-ups

Challenges

- ^{establishing} ~~proffer~~ for infrastructure in advance of development
- staying consistent across changes in elected officials
- constant communication about emerging challenges, opportunities, and Board responses / decisions

Other Comments

- good schools - w/ comparable programs, comparable resources, comparable facilities for all areas of county

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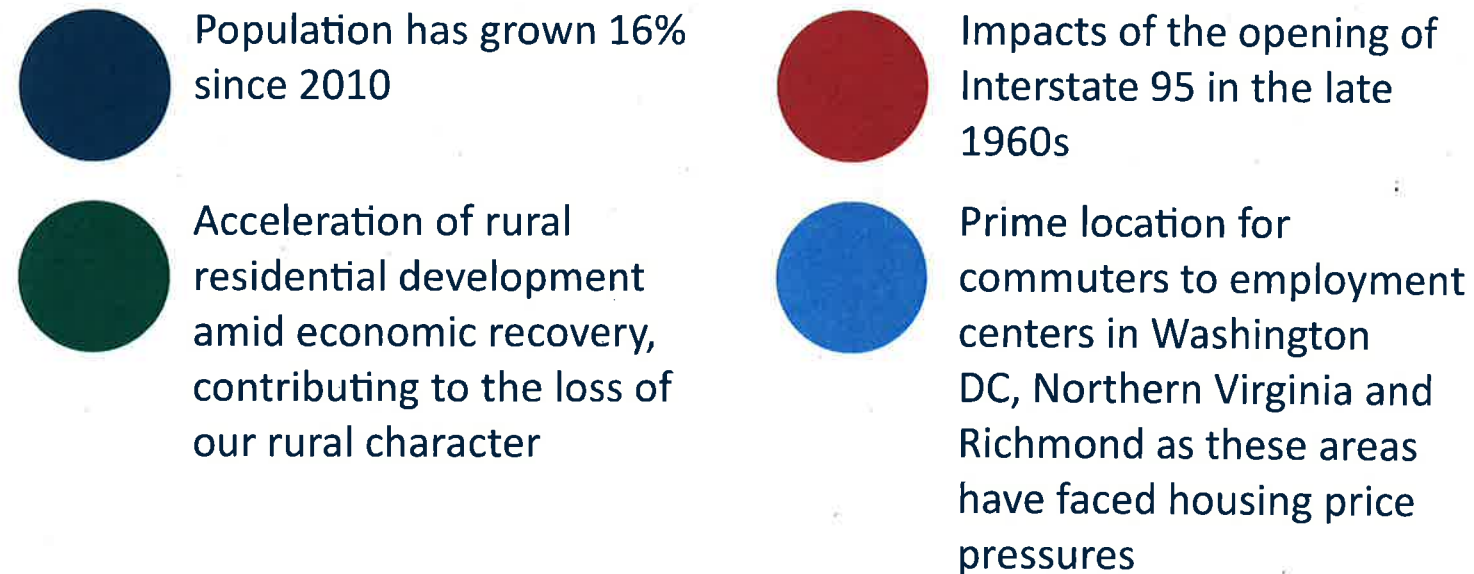
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Opportunities

Growth in itself is a great opportunity as long as the infrastructure is implemented effectively for the community.

Programs to allow A-1 residence to maximize portion of their property outside of Residential Development

Pedestrian walkways & Bike exclusive paths in Rural areas just in close proximity of Urban Areas (Stetson, Mountain View)

Challenges

Providing flexible VRE schedule would assist in commuters leaving Target Area working in D.C./NVA.

Build comparable recreational center similar to Embury Mills Sportsplex in targeted growth area

A

Other Comments

A-1 zoning should NOT change

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Opportunities

Challenges

*we are concerned about down zoning on A-1 don't change
concerned about property rights*

Other Comments

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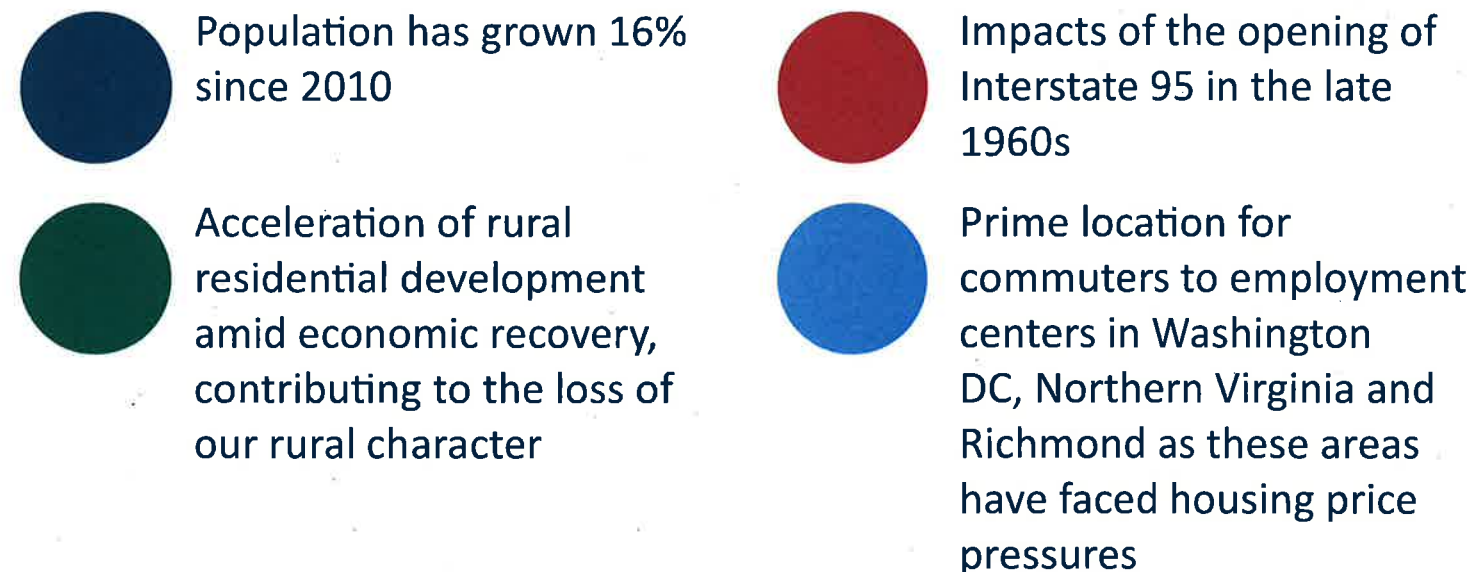
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Opportunities

Be careful with design of targeted growth areas + make them family-friendly + not too clustered together.

Internet services!

Challenges

IF Culpeper + Albemarle are the shining examples, then this is a concern. These counties have been destroyed and now feature high traffic, shopping center strip malls, divided by natural resources, etc.

What happens to "pockets" of A-1 properties that may be in or near the targeted growth areas? Will they be forced to re-zone? Or will they have to sell?

Other Comments

Leave A-1 property alone.

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Opportunities

Challenges

I would like for no more development on secondary roads. If developers cannot pay for upgrades no more development should occur.
I do not wish to see any development on A-1 land. Enough already.
Limited growth.
5 acre minimum lot size
additional water & sewer plants.

Other Comments

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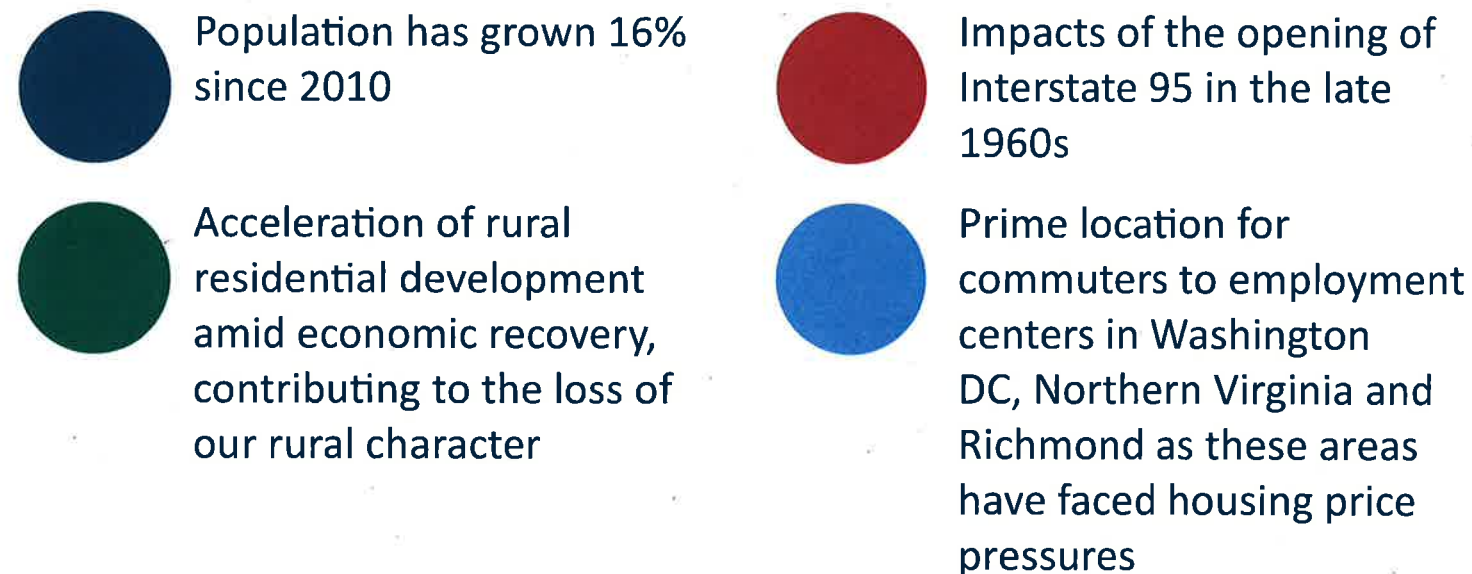
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Opportunities

- Increase the lot size required to build a home. This can be increased from 3 acres to 5 or 10 acres out in the rural areas.
- Make this a low density County. Have the ~~the~~ northern Counties and Spotsylvania be the urban area.

Challenges

- Water issues.

Other Comments

- Short term outlook utilizing cluster development will eventually change to full development.
- Once the clusters are abated in the rural areas the feel and use will move away from rural. Urban people will move into the clusters thereby changing the use of the land.
- Keep stuff as rural as possible.

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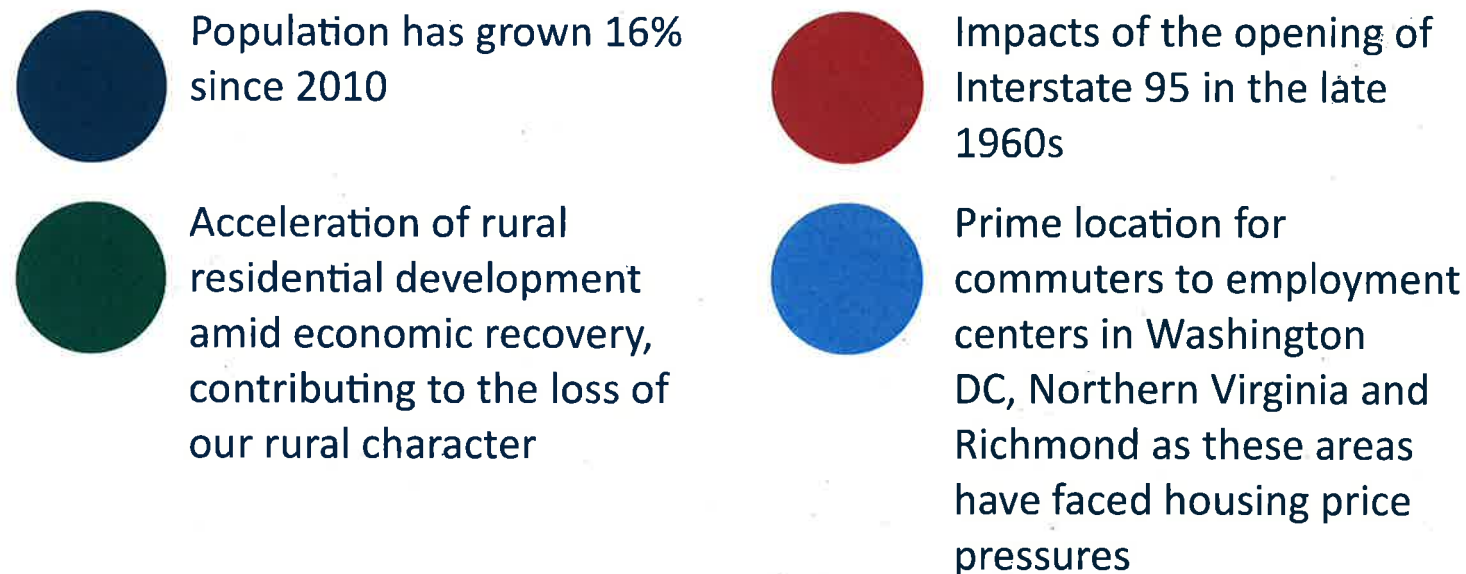
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Opportunities

1. Increase min lot sizes to reduce growth
2. You can encourage quality of life by reducing density. There is no benefit to being Fairfax County
3. Increase lot size, have lot fees go to improve local roads not other parts of county.
2. Make new development "sidewalk" taxes high enough to build & staff new schools.

Challenges

1. Public comment should have gone before stakeholder.
2. Water issues - reduce number of houses to be built on wells.
TDR encourage too much growth - we end up with more houses than we would have without TDR
3. Keep development out of rural areas.
You are making a few property owners / developers happy at the expense of every other voter.

Other Comments

Build new schools before more houses!
Make it easier for companies to open here since residential real estate does not pay for itself.
Cluster developments are a bad idea. You end up with more houses and lower taxes for the land. Also in the future they can change laws to have infill development and then we have even more houses.

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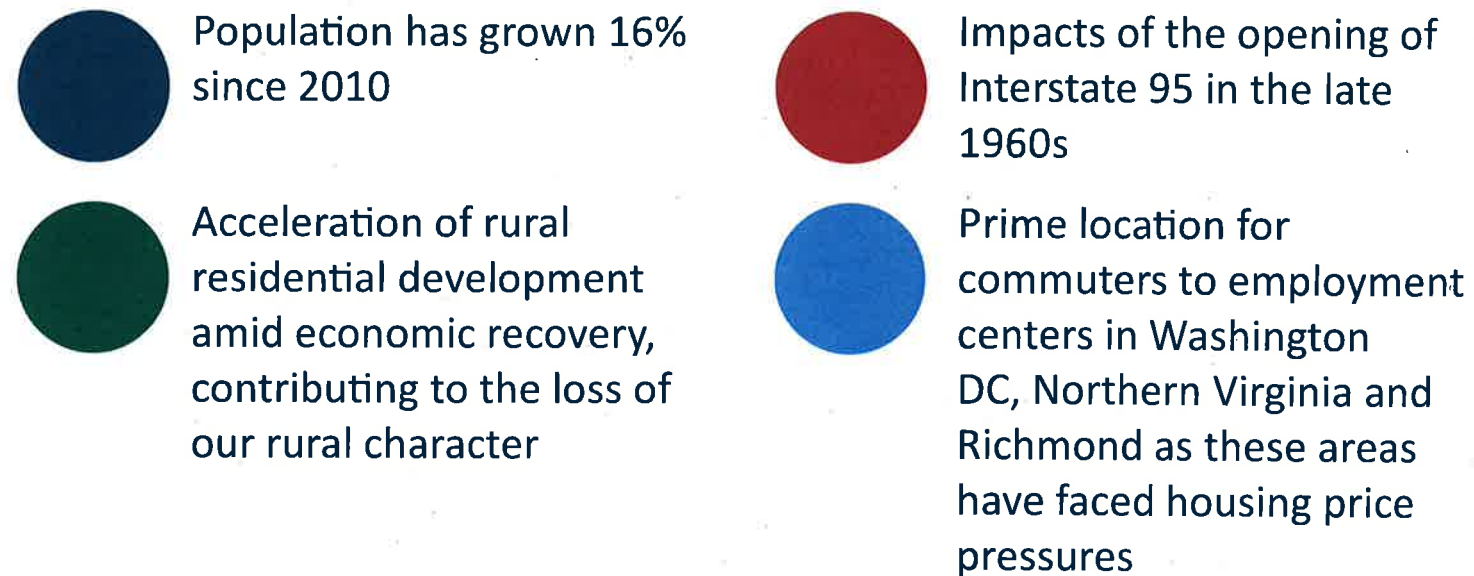
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Opportunities

1. Bring more commercial areas into Urban Services Areas to collect more taxes.

2.

Challenges

1. Not Enough schools for amount of people moving to Stafford

2. Not All areas in Urban Services Areas have cable available. Need to address this issue.

3. Keeping the residents of Stafford that already live here first in process of growth. These land owners need to be considered when approving zoning changes.

4. Getting developers to be responsible.

Other Comments

1. Roads in Urban Services Areas do not have the ability to handle the amount of traffic / no sidewalks on most roads in this Area

2. Growth should not be in outlying Areas but need more planning into growth of Urban Services Areas.

3. No construction traffic in Areas around Targeted growth Areas where signs say no through traffic

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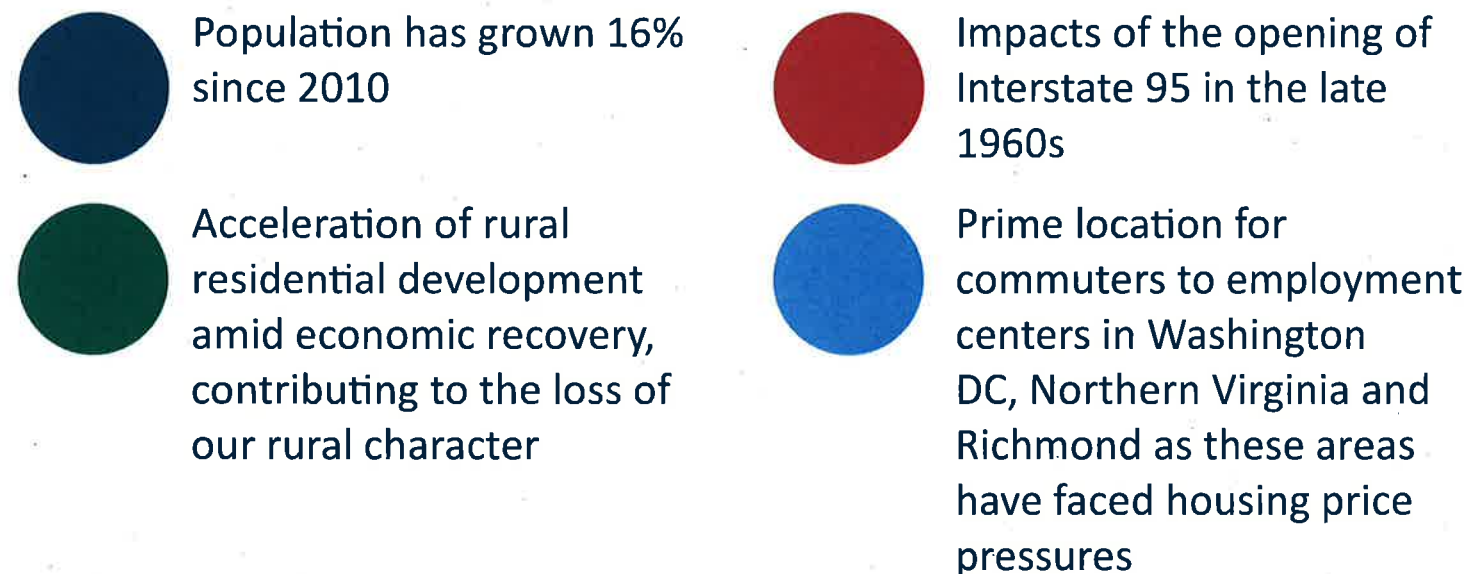
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Opportunities

1.) ADD THINGS LIKE ANOTHER LIBRARY, COMMUNITY CENTER AND VERY IMPORTANTLY A SCHOOL OF HIGHER EDUCATION. CONSIDER A COMMUNITY COLLEGE OR A VO TECH.

Challenges

1.) EXPANDED DEVELOPMENT WILL INCREASE TRAFFIC & CONGESTION.
2.) WHAT ARE THE STRAINS ON THE INFRASTRUCTURE SUCH AS WATER, SEWER & ELECTRIC?

Other Comments

DISSOLVE THE GOOD OL' BOYS IN STAFFORD. THERE IS AN INFLUX OF PEOPLE FROM ALL PARTS OF THE COUNTRY, THE COUNTY NEEDS TO CATCH UP WITH THE REST OF THE COUNTRY. WE DON'T NEED KNUCKLEDRAGGIN' DEPUTIES AND MIDDLEVAL PROSECUTORS.

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-  Impacts of the opening of Interstate 95 in the late 1960s
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Opportunities

Challenges

- Need more amenities in the Urban Areas
- Reuse the existing run down areas
 - Incentives (Tax break) for using existing structure

Other Comments

- ① Increase the growth in the USA by allowing Rezoning with zero profits - Bonus densities -
- ② Negotiate with owners of large parcels to enact a plan to grow
- ③ Stop the "Fear" of a project that is "Too Big" Enable 4x more growth than you want or know is coming - The Rural area will be protected.

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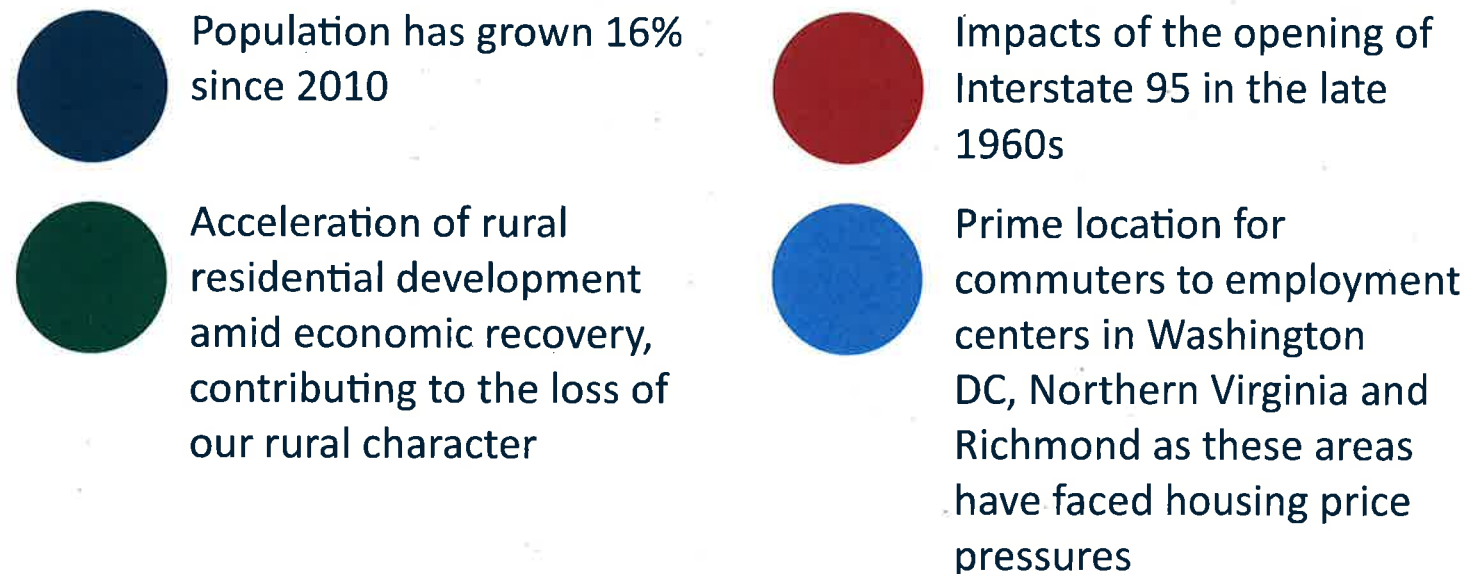
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Opportunities

~~Main rural~~ Maintain rural areas for farmers + forests.
Set aside space for playgrounds within walking distance in urban areas.
Create a state park in our county where people can go to camp, fish, hike and relax.

Challenges

Maintaining and improving quality school system.
Public/private partnerships sound great up front-but if we give away control and opportunities to make money ~~for a county~~ ^{for some} let's look at other possible avenues like bonds.
If all of the 26.5% of the rural is developed into 3 acres lots and have houses on them- how can we call it rural if farmers and forests are gone?
Hold developers accountable for promises made

Other Comments

Sidewalks and bike paths are needed.

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Opportunities

Challenges

MAINTAINING CLOSE TIES w/ SCHOOL DIVISION. SINCE PROPERTY DEVELOPMENT IMPACTS SCHOOL CAPACITY, THE REZONING PROCESS NEEDS TO BE ATTENDED TO BY ALL "STAKEHOLDERS" (BOS, SCPS, PUBLIC, ETC...). FORMAL MEMBERS OF SUCH A 'BOARD' SHOULD BE GIVEN EQUAL RIGHTS OF REFUSAL - ANY MEMBER SHOULD BE ABLE TO VETO THE PROPOSAL

Other Comments

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Opportunities

Find a way to forest growth by incentivizing small/local builders. How? They cannot afford the properties inside the USA. Provide water and sewer to more areas

Challenges

Forcing small ^{local} builders out
Making people's possible retirement income go away by downzoning
Land will become too expensive for locals to compete

Other Comments

If the county residents told each of the members of the BOD that they need to give up half of their retirement savings/IRAs/etc they would not accept it. Why should the larger land holders accept downzoning

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Opportunities

Better Growth on Courthouse Road. We have on a Strip Mall on Wal Pole, but not much for a growing community. With growth comes stores.

Challenges

Since 2013 I have been trying to Sec 48 Acres in Stafford County. Each time the Board of Supervisors said ^{NO} ~~Yes~~. The property is located between Shelton Woods and Shelton Woods - to the west, and Ameele and Rodney Thomas School to the East, land to the South and land to the North.

Other Comments

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Future Growth

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This policy tool ensures progress toward the shared vision.

Current Situation – Changing Conditions

Despite a long history in attempts to address concerns about residential growth, changing conditions have impacted our ability to be successful in changing development patterns:

Population has grown 16% since 2010

Acceleration of rural residential development amid economic recovery, contributing to the loss of our rural character

Impacts of the opening of Interstate 95 in the late 1960s (Challenges)

Prime location for commuters to employment centers in Washington DC, Northern Virginia and Richmond as these areas have faced housing price pressures

Current Situation – Where we are Today

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Notes

Opportunities

A community park & Recreation Area OR Housing 153 Courthouse Road - Joyce Fitzhugh 48 ACRES. Housing developments being built around the 48 ACRES is not beneficial to the County. The property is up for SALE. Retail location in Rural Residential Areas, 4 GAS stations, Entertainment Venues, Community Center if you are not a member of a HOA.

Challenges

95 interstate infrastructure development has a great impact on Courthouse Road. The remainder of the courthouse Road is under developed. Need of sidewalks on the Rural Roads for walking, shopping & Recreation in the targeted growth AREAS.

Retail businesses in Rural Areas other than a Walmart on every corner.

Other Comments

Employment Center in Stafford vs. Fredericksburg Schools - do not segregate school and separate - expand the schools and eliminate trailers.

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Opportunities

Challenges

enlarge VRE stations & parking
have more frequent VRE trains

Other Comments

Need one way street in targeted growth area

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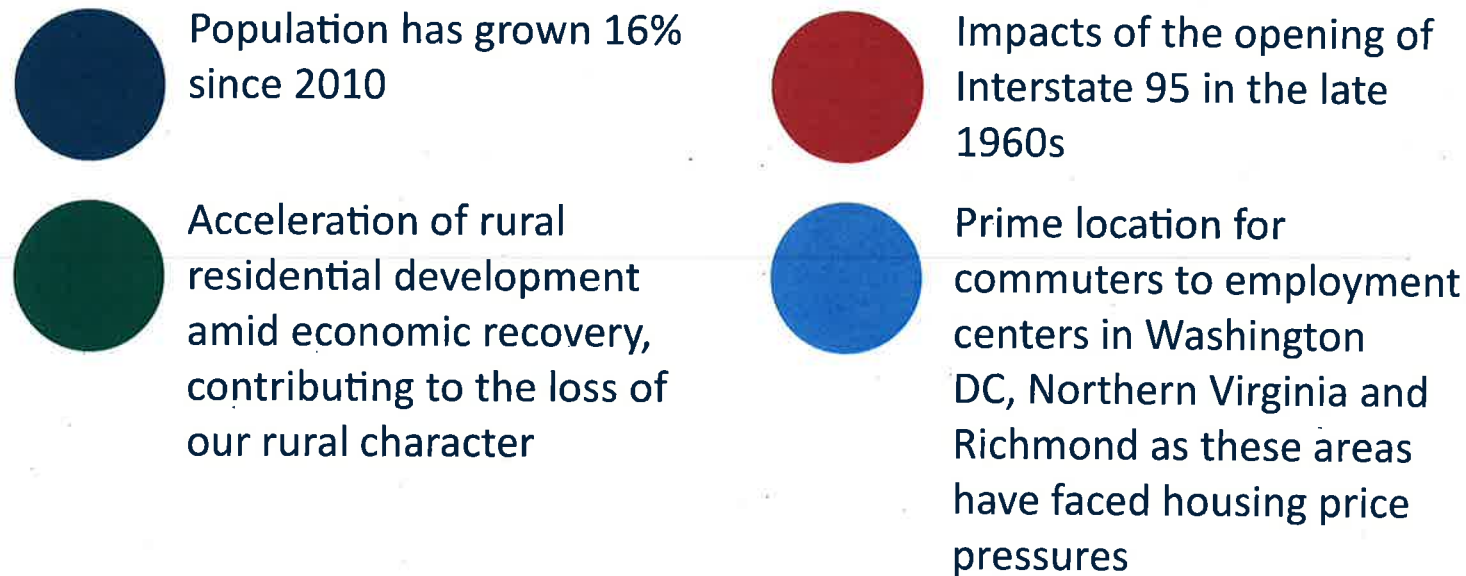
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Notes

Kristen Barnes

Opportunities

- Down zone - That will help
- Do not incentivize
- Business growth in target areas is preferential

Challenges

- Huge lobbying pressures from special interests
- Tax increases needed for infrastructure
- Developers profit - taxes go up

Other Comments

- no more rezoning A-1
- Down zone is almost 1 house per 10 acres
- Keep Stafford a rural refuge.
- Proffers Don't work
- we don't want to be a rat race
- We want to stay a rural refuge!

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Adela Bertoldi (312) 213-0318

Notes

Opportunities

No More Apartments / condos, Limit housing to Bi-Right. I want more commercial and amenities in Stafford.

Challenges

Traffic in urban areas → INCREASE Impact Fees! For example, it is unreasonable that Courthouse is only being ~~ext~~ expanded to Winding Creek Rd and not all the way to Shelton Shop, so nice that people can walk and bike to nowhere and turn around. ~~Also~~ Also, it always makes sense to BOTTLE NECK from 4 to 2 lanes in front of a school. We should have the 2nd phase of the Courthouse Project.

Other Comments

Developer needs to be held accountable for what they promise → i.e., mix use town center planned, but never happen → EVER! I am tired of spending my money in Fredericksburg → helping them improve their roads, etc. Stafford residents want to keep our money here.

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Opportunities

Rural preservation initiatives:
1) Encourage more conservation easements (purchase)
2) Active purchase of development rights

Challenges

Cluster development:
1) Any property with public water available should be included regardless of new boundary lines.
Use infrastructure that's currently completed!

Other Comments

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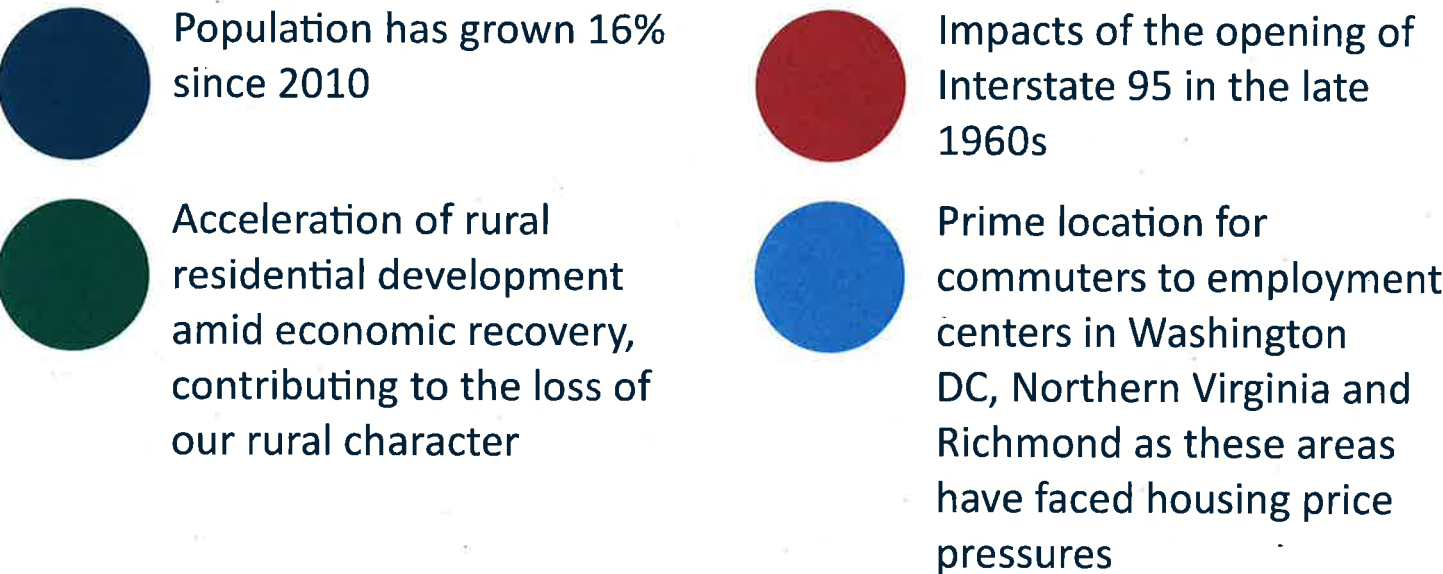
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Opportunities

No more rezoning - Keep A1 as A1

Challenges

- Keep urban growth out of A1 where water is a critical problem and no planned public water is available
- limit cluster developments in A1

Other Comments

- Stafford needs to require developers to put in wells or test for wells BEFORE houses are built
- Stafford needs more North-South roads. During winter storms, it is extremely difficult to get N or S.

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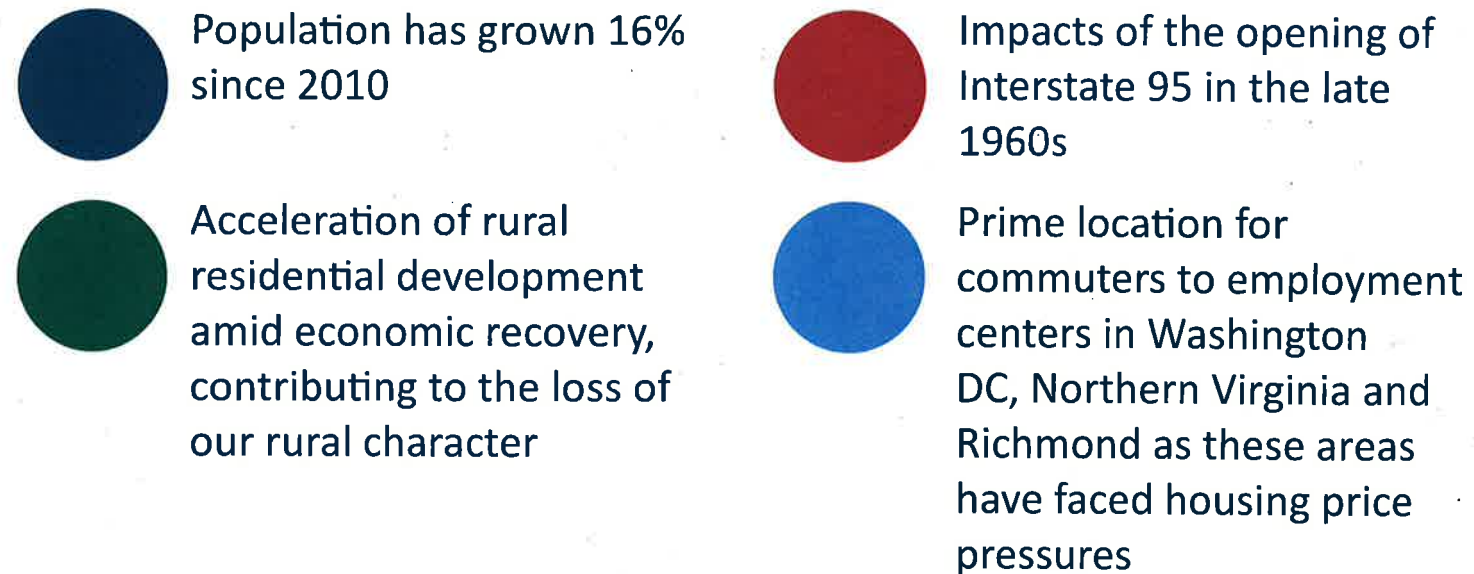
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Opportunities

Please don't downzone A-I prop.
I have 65 Acres that can't be
sold with this possibility
Thank you

Challenges

Other Comments

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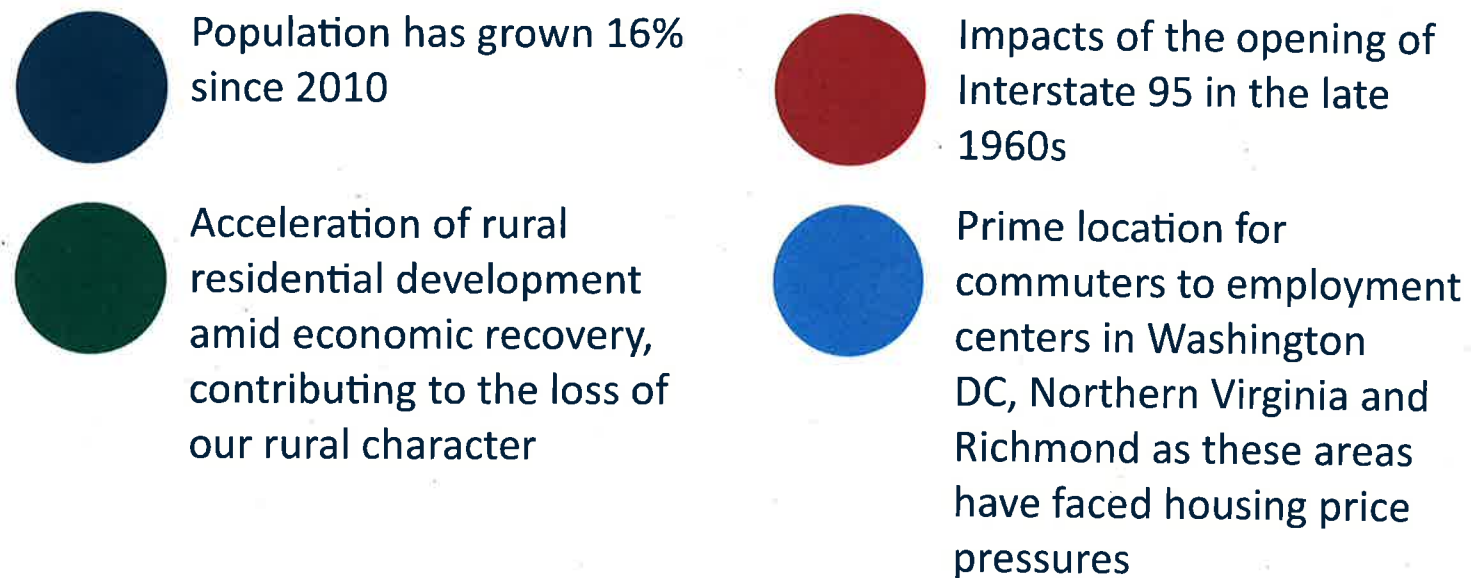
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Opportunities

We could attract higher quality business such as
Truckers to come to the area. Better internet.

Challenges

As the man said during presentation, I'm concerned
about water & sewage supports will the agencies
support all this housing.

Other Comments

Why does development have to proceed. If resources
and infrastructure cannot support it then it should not be
allowed. We really have to be aware of.

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Opportunities

Challenges

I 95 Traffic over flow on US 1. This effects movement of North South traffic

Other Comments

- The Airport Commission ~~was~~ Needs to be considered a Stake Holder
- Accept Planning Commission Airport Planning Report that that was not Excepted By Board of Supervisor several years ago.
- No Residential homes around Airport, Industrial Only.

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Notes

Opportunities

Challenges

THE FUTURE GROWTH #1 ARE INCONCRETE -

Other Comments

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Notes

Opportunities

COMMUNITY QUESTIONS - QUALITY OF LIFE IN TGA's. JOBS, RESTAURANTS RETAIL. NEED A GOOD MIX OF HOUSING AND BUSINESS.

Challenges

INFRASTRUCTURE = ROADS. CURRENT ROADS ARE OVERLOADED AND DANGEROUS. NO PULLOFFS AND NARROW PAVEMENT.

Other Comments

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Notes

Opportunities

increase from

commitments in place prior to first O/C report

Challenges

Other Comments

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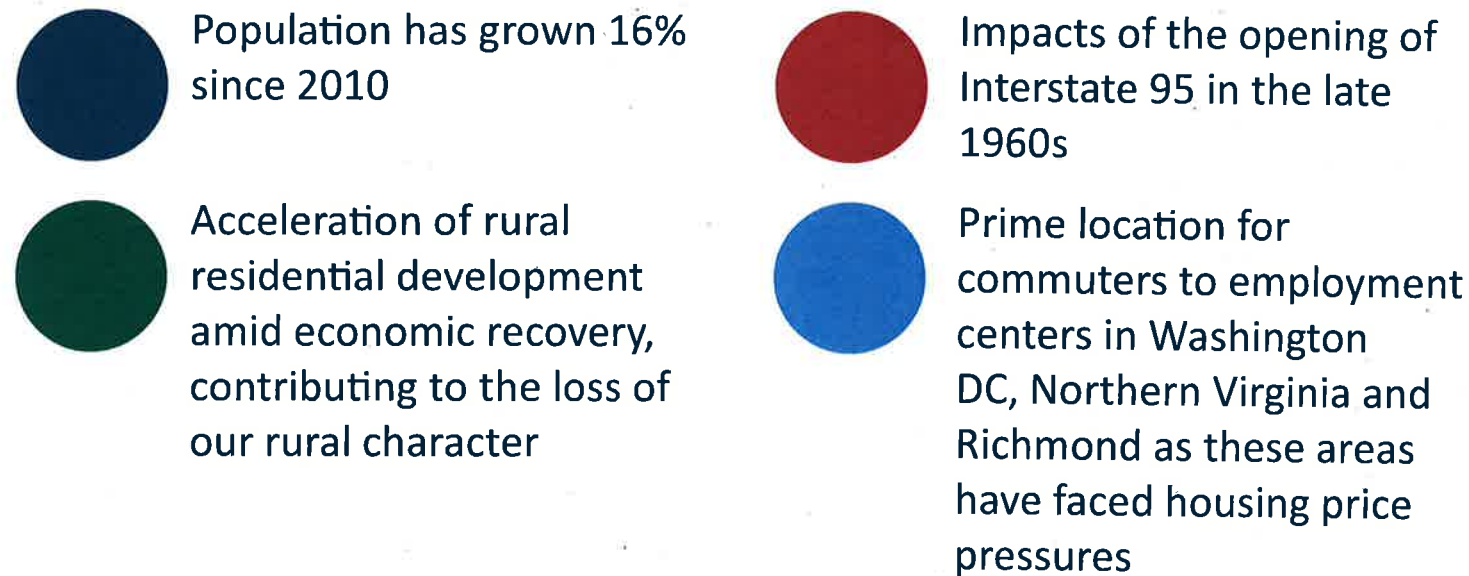
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Opportunities

old Shell Gas Station on Rt. 1 across from Aquia Harbor Shopping Center has been sitting vacant for years and now they are building something else next to it

Challenges

Infrastructure (roads), ^{traffic} overcrowded schools
affordable housing

county losing revenue -- residents have to go north/south to see a movie at a theatre or go to a decent restaurant

Other Comments

where are our county supervisors?

Further development of 610 and Aquia Harbor

Lack of diversity in planning group - bring Stafford NAACP as stakeholder interview

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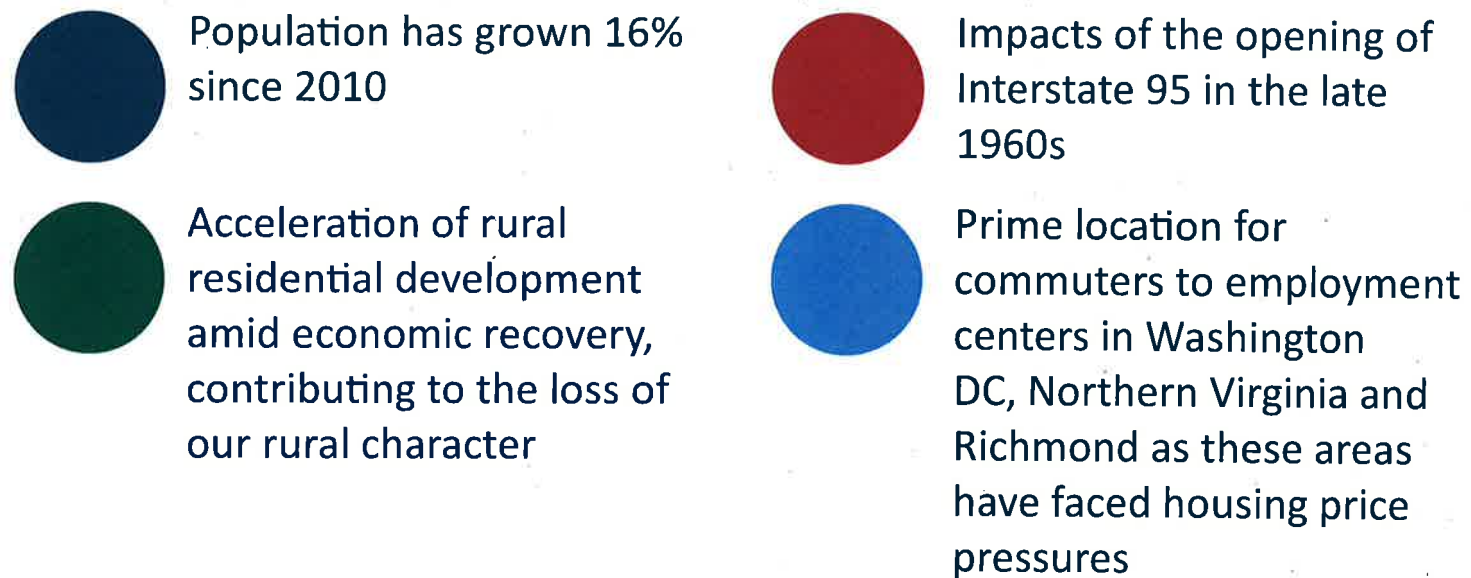
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Notes

Opportunities

- Reduce urban blight already causing concerns

Challenges

- Avoid limiting land rights

Other Comments

Avoid any changes/new policies that will raise taxes - keep taxes lower than peer counties

Comments

Alex McAlister : Big impacts on individual property owners

Open to different ideas

Increase impact fees to offset public facility costs

Push land use taxation as a tool to keep land rural

~~Not~~ Not necessarily about limiting rural growth, it's about doing it right

Careful about directing growth into urban areas due to traffic

~~Not~~ Encourage mixed use development to

Question:

Why are the urban service areas ^{not} supplied with water + sewer?

Particularly when septic is restricted.

EXAMPLE — ^{our property} West on Rt. 117 approaching
Corner ^{Rt.} 616.

Awaiting Developer?!

David + James Newbrough

APPENDIX D: APRIL 23RD PUBLIC MEETING – INDIVIDUAL AND COLLECTIVE RESPONSES

Table Discussions 04/23/19 – Major Themes

Table 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand transfer of development rights • Impact fees/school fees/fire and safety fees to pay their own way for each new unit developed • No down zoning – focus density in urban service area • Reevaluate cluster ordinance • Affordable housing
Table 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To encourage growth in the TGA, make it more attractive – increase walkability, focus on design • Expand TDR countywide • Keep A-1 lot sizes where they are – this will provide for more units to transfer to TGA via the TDR program • Keep the clustering option, with some improvements, and land use – these programs can do a good job in preserving rural character
Table 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficult to support incentives in the targeting areas with current insufficient infrastructure • Focus of all solutions needs to be on the TGA to preserve rural character – master plan needs to be created as a pathway to expedited process for desired development • PRD and TDR can be a solution • Concerned that we as an “uninformed citizenry” are not being closely listened to – as opposed to having the hired experts making the recommendation • Reevaluate impact fees
Table 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No down zoning in the A-1, don’t kill landowner values • Make development easier inside the USA, expand the USA to a large enough area that you don’t have to tear down existing development to get desired outcomes • Make clustering available throughout and don’t change A-1 lot sizes • Group is split on TDR and PDR – concerned that landowners may be taken advantage of
Table 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water and sewer availability and quality concerns • Limit development until we get more schools, we can’t sustain class sizes with the limited amount of teachers we have • Concern about limited well and septic capacity • Protect property owners legal rights
Table 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rural areas need internet/cable, good roads, fire and police service, other public services • Use some rural areas to develop a village-like mix of homes and businesses – 80/20 split is not necessary • Need walkways and bike trails • Build a county connector alternative to I-95 • For developments, need to attract all age groups to move there and form a community

Table 7

- Limit growth in rural areas
- Encourage mixed use developments in the urban areas
- Re-evaluate zoning approval processes in urban areas – streamline
- Need transportation improvements and better public transit to encourage and sustain growth in urban areas

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Notes

Opportunities

Challenges

Will "Real Estate Value" increase because of this growth
"Taxes" With this growth, will Real Estate taxes be lowered
"Transportation" - will Fred cover all of Stafford for the ones with no transportation

School over population

Traffic - out of control, what will be done

Other Comments

What does "Urban Services Area" cover?

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Steve Carnie

Notes

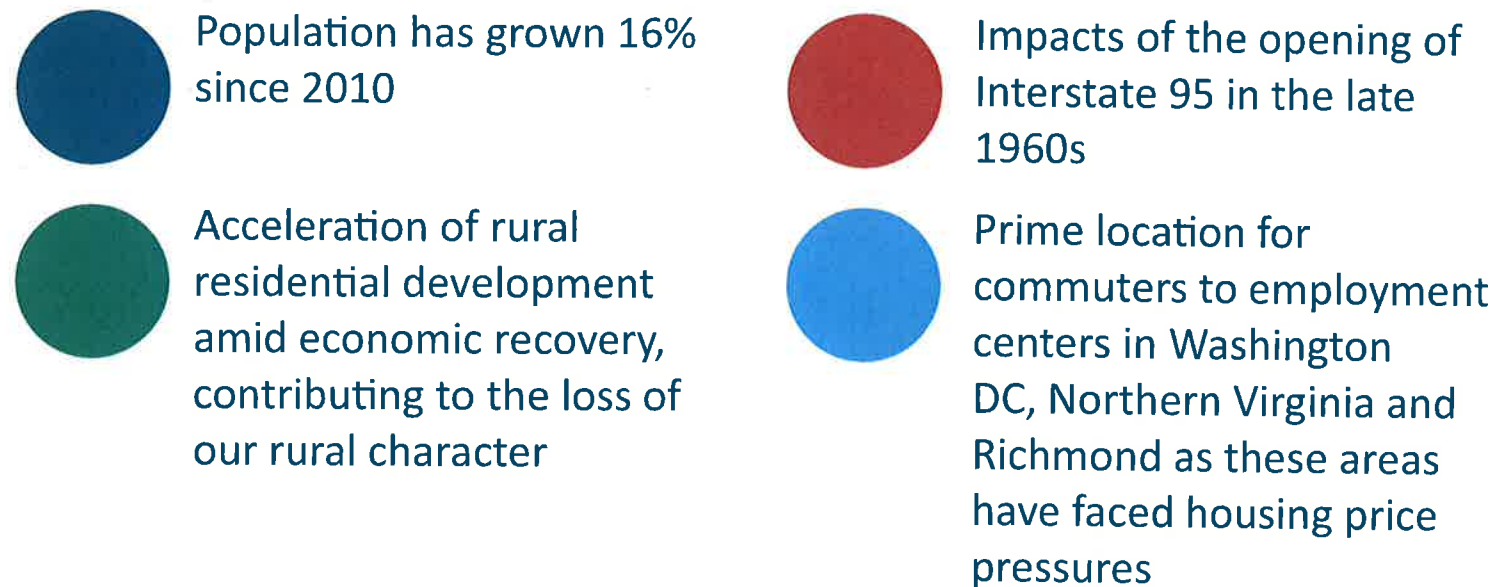
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Vary from year to year

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Opportunities

Challenges

Amazon - Do we really expect their employees to move down here? What % of Amazon Internet/Cable employees are we expecting to come here?
We need it!

Other Comments

* Transfer of Dev Rights ?? (YOR)
Density bonuses ?? for urban objectives.
Define Clustering? (Per 1 lot per 3 acres)
Define - Large Property Owners
- Med
- Small
** Side walks !!!

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Notes

Opportunities

- Need to improve roads to better use existing primary transportation such as I-95 & 95.
- Improve in and out flow from VDOT commuter lots.
- Add a Spur similar to 295 around Richmond to move through traffic around Stafford and Spotsylvania back to I-95 below Spotsylvania Southern + Caroline line.

Challenges

- Keeping Rural Land owners happy with the opportunities to capitalize on long term investments such as farms owned by a family for multiple generations.
- Focusing growth in targeted growth areas and Urban Service Areas.
- Funding Sources for PDR.

Other Comments

- Don't change the A-1 Density
- Keep use value tax

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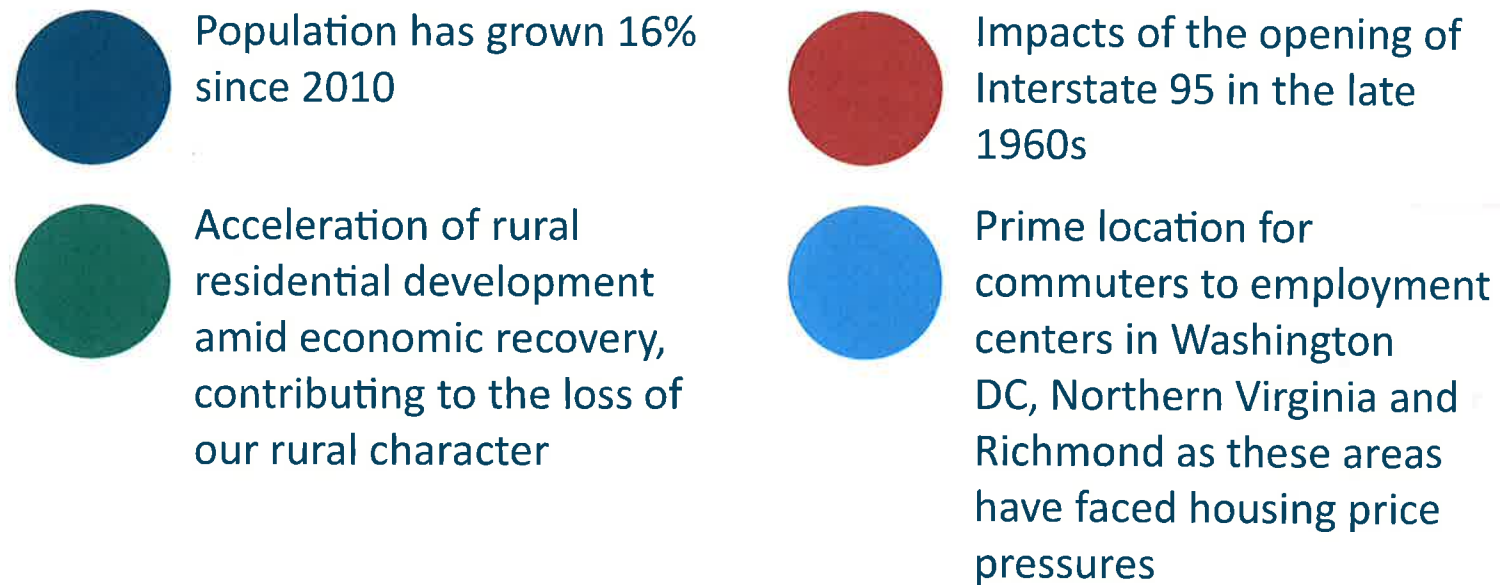
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Notes

Opportunities

Challenges

Other Comments

Fine developers that don't promise what they promised.

Actually develop what you say your going to do.

Stop put repetitive Stores on one road
Ex.) 17 Auto Stores, Hotels)

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Comprehensive Plan Goal	80%	20%
Current Status* <i>Approved + built lots</i>	77.7%	22.3%
Future Growth <i>2036 @ 200 homes per year</i> Current trend	73.5%	26.5%

Notes

Opportunities

RIVERS, CREEKS
MILL SURROUNDED BY DEV.

Challenges

THEATER ON GLO? NOT A DESTINATION
NO BIKE PATHS RUNNING
SQUEEZED B/T STONE BRIDGE + CENTRAL PARK

Other Comments

LAST COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2016
RURAL AREA - "LARGE?" LOT SUBDIVISION

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Future Growth Current trend	●	73.5%	26.5%

2016 last updated

Notes

2%

4%

1000 homes

x

800

new homes USA

200

rural

16

homes a year
more than
targeted

Opportunities

• ~~What does discourage growth~~

•

• How many Higher density jobs have been approved in last 10 years

•

•

• is down zoning

•

Challenges

Other Comments

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Notes

Opportunities

Expanded TDR

Expanded Cluster

Challenges

Rezoning Approval Process

Constant Changes to Zoning Rules

Fear of Downzoning

Other Comments

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Prime location for commuters to employment centers in Washington DC, Northern Virginia and Richmond as these areas have faced housing price pressures

Current Situation – Where we are Today

	Urban Services Area	Rural Area
Comprehensive Plan Goal	80%	20%
Current Status	77.7%	22.3%
Future Growth Current trend	73.5%	26.5%

Notes

23 Apr 19

Dep County Admin Mike Smith

Opportunities

Open up TDR & PDR across county & advertise it
Allow developers to purchase DR

Allow HDD

Allow High Density (Apartments) to build
affordable housing

Challenges

Other Comments

Healthy Growth

Community Forum

April 22 and 23, 2019

Future Growth


Comprehensive Plan calls for 80% of growth within Urban Services Area (USA) and only 20% of new development to occur outside of USA to preserve rural areas.

This policy tool ensures progress toward the shared vision.


Current Situation – Changing Conditions

Despite a long history in attempts to address concerns about residential growth, changing conditions have impacted our ability to be successful in changing development patterns:

 Population has grown 16% since 2010

 Acceleration of rural residential development amid economic recovery, contributing to the loss of our rural character

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Notes

Opportunities

- Design of cluster w. Hoods
- Transfer Rights
- bring in jobs into Target Growth Areas

Challenges

- maintain Rural Integrity of Stafford Co.
- By-right Zoning
- Affordable Housing
- Infrastructure
- Water/Sewer

Other Comments

- Manage Growth / ~~Right-Size~~ Right-Size
- We are a Community

Healthy Growth

Community Forum

April 22 and 23, 2019

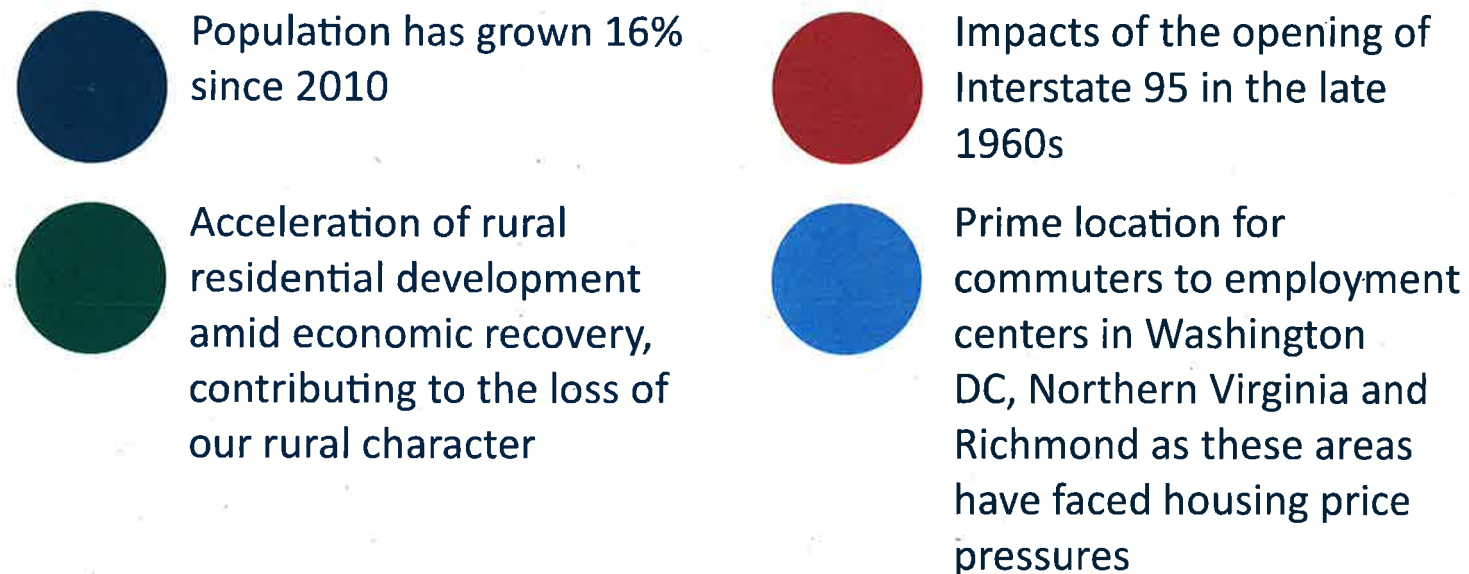
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Notes

Opportunities

Focus growth in Targeted Growth Areas
so communities are walkable and driving
is minimized. People want to live, work,
and shop in the area.

Preserve rural, low density areas by
concentrating growth in TGA

Challenges

Getting developers to focus on TGA
Affordable Housing

Other Comments

Do anything to disincentivize growth
in rural areas

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Notes

Opportunities

- TDRs ALLOW EFFECTIVE DOWNZONING BY LANDOWNERS CHOICE
- EXPAND TDRs/PDRs COUNTY WIDE

Challenges

- MANAGED CONTROL OF GROWTH.
- AVOID PROFFERS W/ LONG TERM LIFE CYCLE COSTS
- ~~NO~~ DEVELOPERS TO PAY TRANSPORTATION IMPACT OR DEVELOP ROADS TO MAJOR ARTERIALS

Other Comments

NO DOWNZONING

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Notes

Opportunities

Make cluster 100% of county. 50% of remaining developable ~~land~~ will be in ~~perpetual~~ open space

Charge larger impact/transportation fees. currently \$3,000 per unit. Raise to \$10,000? \$15,000

No such rules in general assembly. Will take HBAU help to get done - ~~legislation~~

Challenges

Land rights, if you change zoning you are retractively reducing someone's land value.

Other Comments

MAKE TODAY A GREAT DAY
AND REMEMBER the choice
is yours. R. LIARD principal

Healthy Growth

Community Forum


April 22 and 23, 2019

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Density - Need more to make phase

Notes

Opportunities

Challenges

↑ TAXES

ROADS

Schools

Other Comments

1/2 Down zoning. A-1

Focus density into the targeted needs.

Healthy Growth

Community Forum

April 22 and 23, 2019

Property
Development
Rights

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Opportunities

Challenges — Concerns

Changing A-1 to 4 acres - Should remain 3 acres

Other Comments

Healthy Growth

Community Forum

April 22 and 23, 2019

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Opportunities

Challenges

Rural Area Preservation; Thriving Urban Areas (preventing the overtake)
Development Rights 1st/3 acs MS
Rezoning?

Other Comments

Healthy Growth

Community Forum

April 22 and 23, 2019

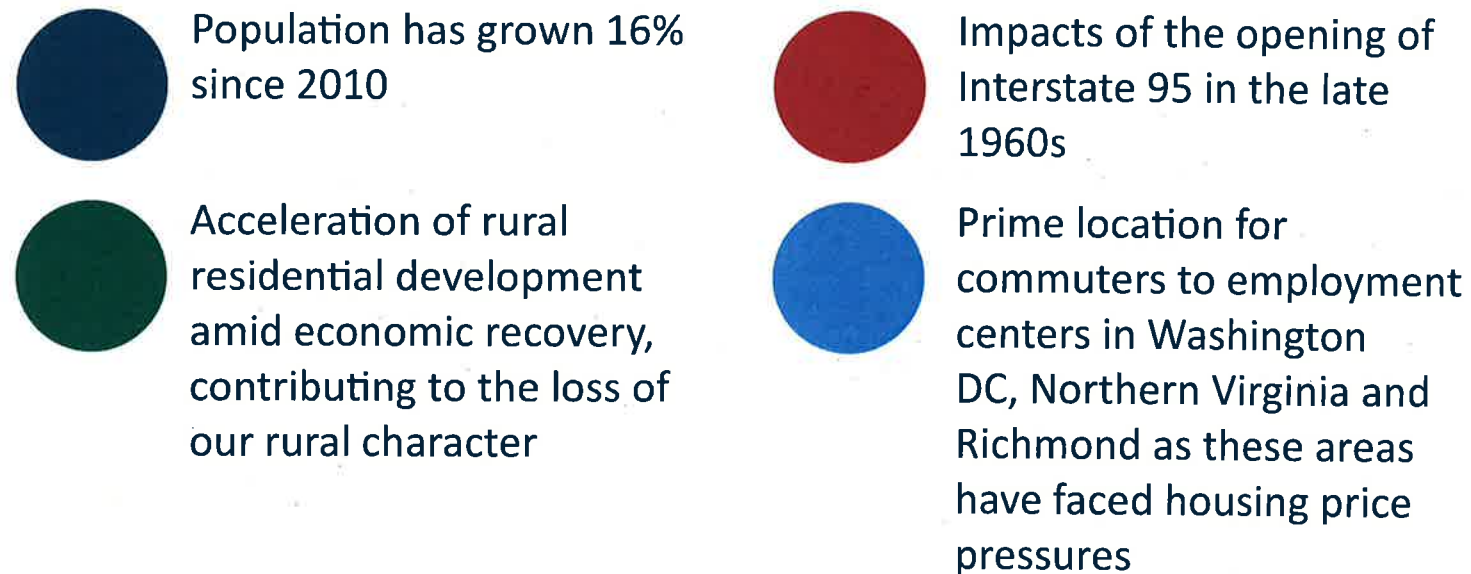
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Notes

/healthygrowth

Opportunities

- We have a lot of access/shoreline to the river – why don't we consider creating riding/walking trails to encourage visits to Stafford. Very much like the GW Parkway.
- Stafford still has the opportunity to attract retirees (USMC access to DMV, closeness to IWM, within 1 hour of 3 major airports).

Challenges

- Hartwood ES needs access to U.S. A or rebuild within USA
- Aquia Town Center should've been a walking/living/shopping dating town center but sits as dirt.
- The T.G.A. that surrounds Rt 17 & borders the Rappahannock considers a town center in that area (Celebrate VA Drive) or attract a "Top golf" business –
- Our school system needs more schools – could we get developers to proffer enough land to build a school – why not incentivize builders to build their communities around a school?!

Other Comments

- What incentives are being offered to people trying to sell land to developers as by-right. To not sell these small clusters of homes that B. of S. have no control over?

Healthy Growth

Community Forum

April 22 and 23, 2019


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Opportunities

IN TARGETED AREA'S INCREASE
OF DIVIDED LOTS, i.e. - a 10 ACRE
LOT & ZONED A1 CAN BE DIVIDE INTO 3 LOTS.
CHALLENGE THAT TO MULT SMALLER LOTS
AN MORE DEVELOPMENT INCREASE # UNITS
IN TARGETED.

Challenges

Other Comments

Healthy Growth

Community Forum

April 22 and 23, 2019

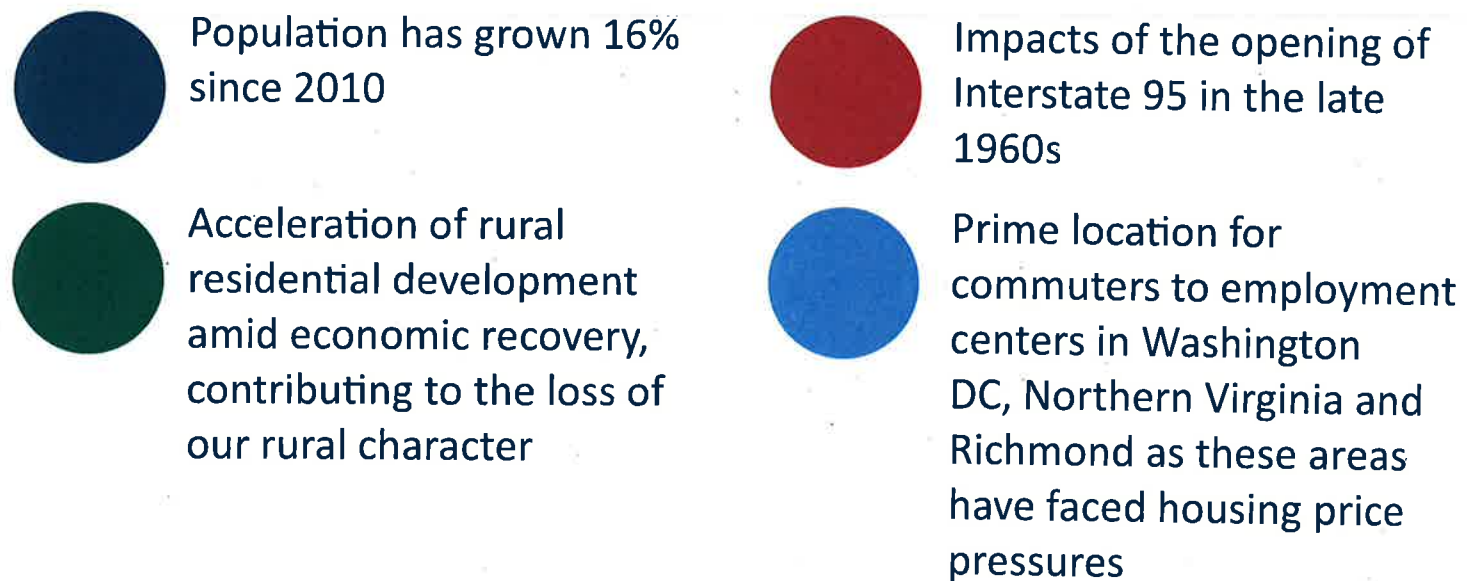
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Notes

Opportunities

• Moving Growth to the USA is a good idea, but how many REZONINGS have we done OVER LAST 20 YEARS?
How much proffer money have we collected

• Why should we downzone and kill the value of older landowners

• A-1 should stay in place

Challenges

• EXPAND Purchase of Development Rights
Sending & Receiving

• Most important thing to make this USA work is to pick a spot to expand the USA

• Why did we REDUCE the cluster AREA

Other Comments

• Go back to cluster in all Rural Area

• Put wetlands RPA in the cluster Area

Healthy Growth

Community Forum

April 22 and 23, 2019

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Future Growth	●	73.5%	26.5%
Current trend			

Notes

Opportunities

Challenges

Other Comments

- 3-Ac lots IS LARGE LOT RURAL RESIDENTIAL
- WHEN IS LAST HIGH DENSITY PROJECT APPROVED?
- STAFFORD TOOK AWAY DENSITY BONUSES
- DO NOT DOWN ZONE
- DO NOT CHANGE A-1 ZONE

Comments

Process concern:
CITIZENS w/ incomplete info,
tasked w/ Idea Generation -

Why ARE we not focused on
Proven Best Practices

We should not, Board should not,
~~PUSH~~ THIS or have Rash
DECISIONS UNTIL Research/home work
IS DONE - Feels premature/missing data

Comments

4/23/19

I realize the complex problem exists with VDOT responsible
for much of the Road decisions - But ^{From Stafford} someone has to advocate
for our crazy traffic problem around I95 & Rte 1. We have
to ~~have~~ have help w/ a master plan of primary & secondary arterials
thru the Urban Svcs Area. It's just too dependent on 95 & Rte 1
to go north or south! Increase development costs $\frac{1}{2}$ local taxes
for ~~better~~ more roads.

Comments

- 20 to 30 years Late on discussion!!!
- Min 3 Acres Across Board A-1 - A2
- Property of Families could be used for their retirement or family Emergency
- TDR - PDR Discussion
- Master Plan Infrastructure
- Property Rights !!
- NO DOWN ZONING !!

Comments

Leave A-1 A-2 As Is

Growth Target Areas need a master

Plan Pre-determined and Stick to The Plan

Don't Over React TO Up and Downs of The Economy

Make Urban Service Areas Pay for PDR

Somehow Slow The National Builders and Help Local Builders

Down zoning would create a Land fire Sale for A-1 ~~A-2~~ Land owners

Comments

STAFFORD HAS RIVERS, FARMS, STRIP MALLS, AND TRAFFIC. WE NEED TO ~~MAKE~~ MAKE IT MORE THAN A PLACE TO DRIVE FROM OR THROUGH. USING A COMPREHENSIVE MASTER PLAN, MAKE DEVELOPMENT EASIER IN BEAUTIFUL AREAS. DO IT WISELY CONSIDERING INFRA-STRUCTURE & GROWTH & TAX BASE. NORTH STAFFORD IS A MODEL OF HALF-VAST PLANS WITH RAZED LOTS AND NO COMMUNITY. HURRY UP.

Comments

4/23/19

Stafford County Planning Requirements

Apply to
All developments
5-10 times
on a scale
in Rural Areas

- Economic Impact Statement
- Environmental Impact Statement
- Social Impact Statement
- Educational Impact Statement
- Traffic Impact Analysis Statement
- Historical Preservation Impact Statement

Thoughts:

- Agri Hubs to incentivize rural economic development
 - Farmer's MKTs Infrastructure Support
 - No fee for County growers
 - Substantial fee for ~~out~~ out-of-county
 - County provides site & permanent shelter with heat for year round facility and maintenance

Larry Beard
540-336-0696

APPENDIX E: APRIL 23RD PUBLIC MEETING – HEALTHY GROWTH PRESENTATION

The image features a hand holding a red pen, pointing at a blueprint map that is overlaid on a landscape. The landscape includes a large, leafy tree on the left, a field of tall grass in the foreground, and a distant horizon under a cloudy sky. The blueprint map shows various building footprints and street layouts. A blue rectangular box is positioned over the center of the image, containing the title text.

Healthy Growth

A Community Dialogue

The agenda



- Review background
- Talk about the current trends and their likely impacts
- Share best practice research
- What we've heard
- ***Your input and feedback***

Guiding Our Discussion

Keep the conversation focused on the specific outcomes being sought by the Board of Supervisors

Safe and respectful opportunity to hear feedback from all perspectives

All input will be valued and shared with the public and the Board – transparency

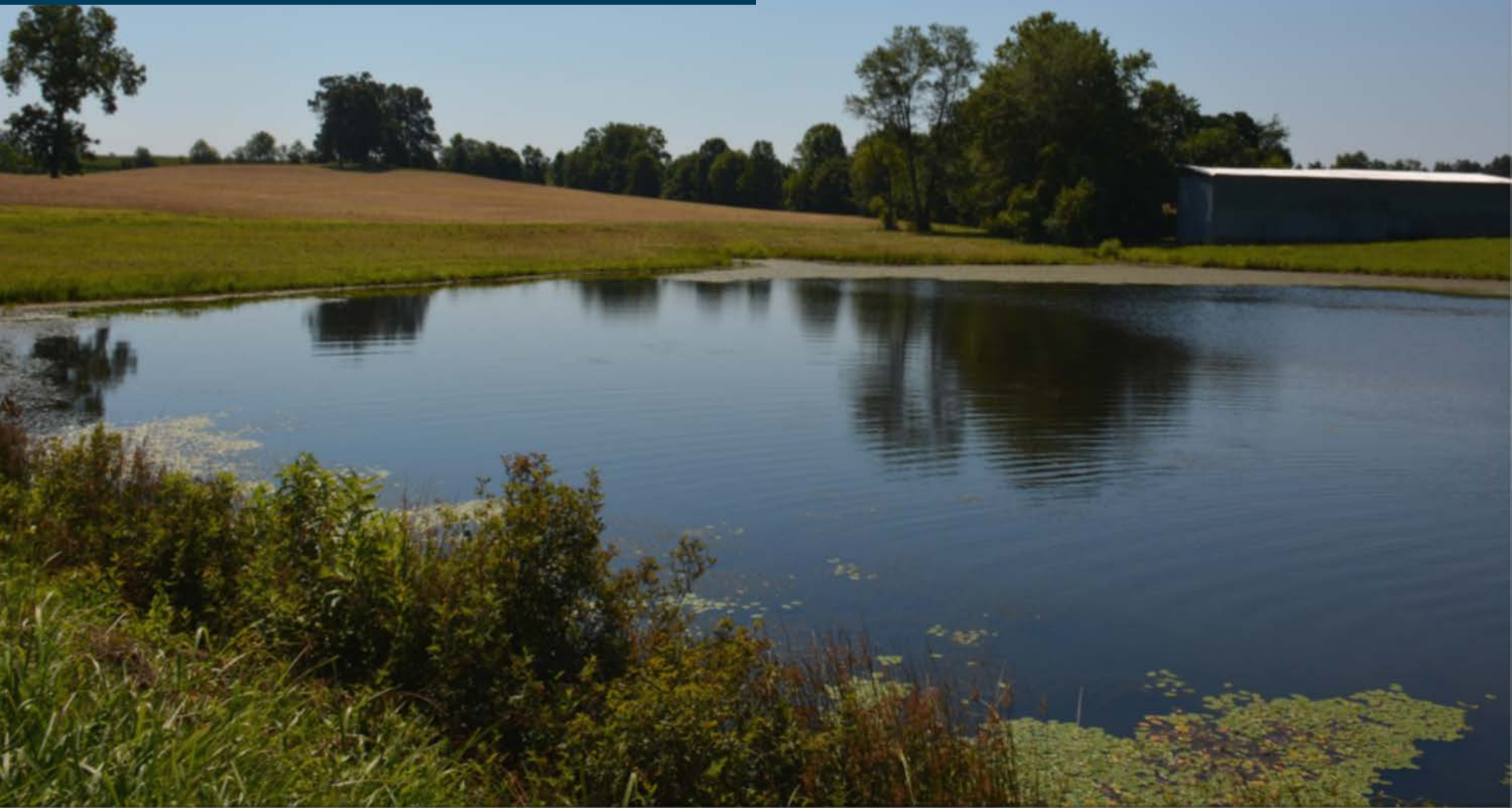


As a community Stafford residents have identified a long-range vision for the County through the guidance of the **Comprehensive Plan** – this vision is based on shared community values and preferences.

Healthy Growth



Preserved Rural Areas

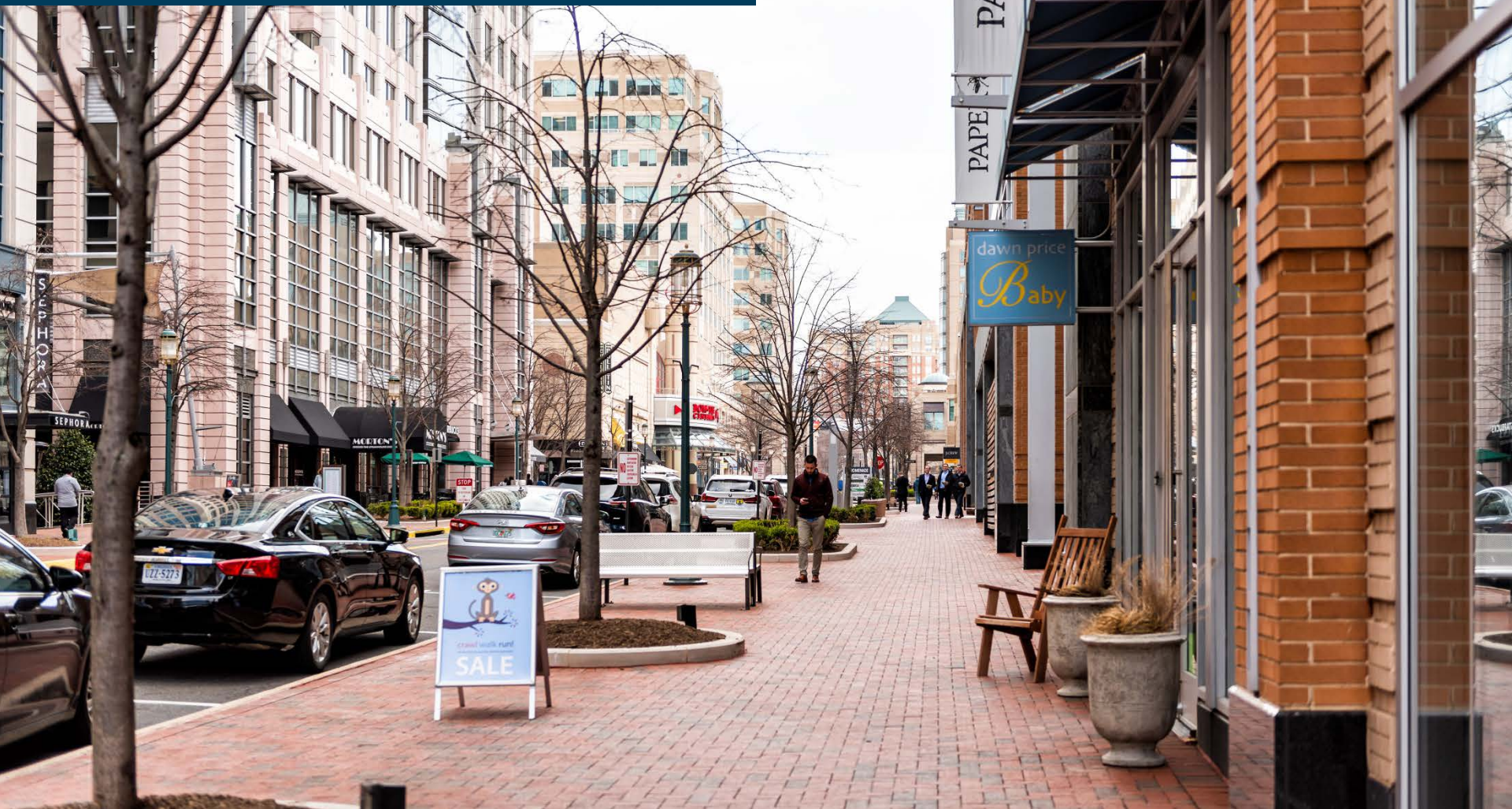


Preserved Rural Areas



Healthy Growth

Thriving Urban Areas



Thriving Urban Areas



The Comprehensive Plan calls for achieving 80% in Urban Services Area (USA) and preserving 20% balance of residential development as rural.

This policy tool ensures progress toward the shared vision.

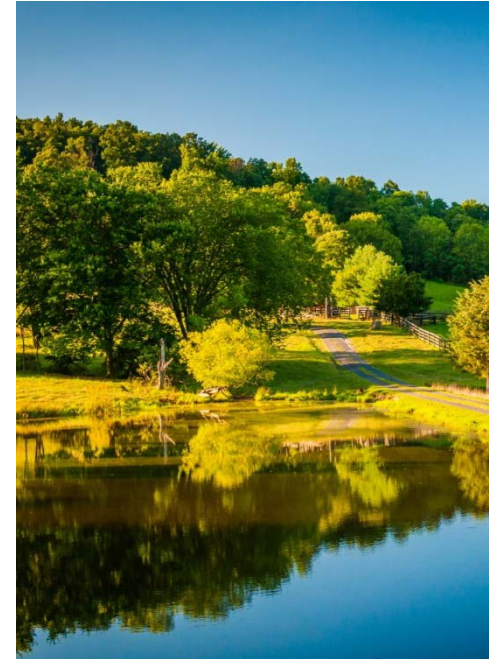
Background - Comprehensive Plan

Healthy Growth



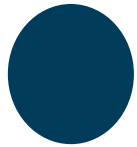
Thriving targeted
growth areas

Preserved rural
areas



Impacts of Changing Conditions

Despite a long history in attempts to address concerns about residential growth, changing conditions have impacted our ability to be successful in changing development pattern to the desired state:



Locality in transition that has grown in population 16% since 2010



Impacts of the opening of Interstate 95 in the late 1960s



Acceleration of rural residential development as the economy has continued to recover from the recession aiding to the loss of our rural character



Prime location for exurban commuters to employment in Washington DC, Northern Virginia and Richmond as these areas have grown as job centers and faced housing price pressures

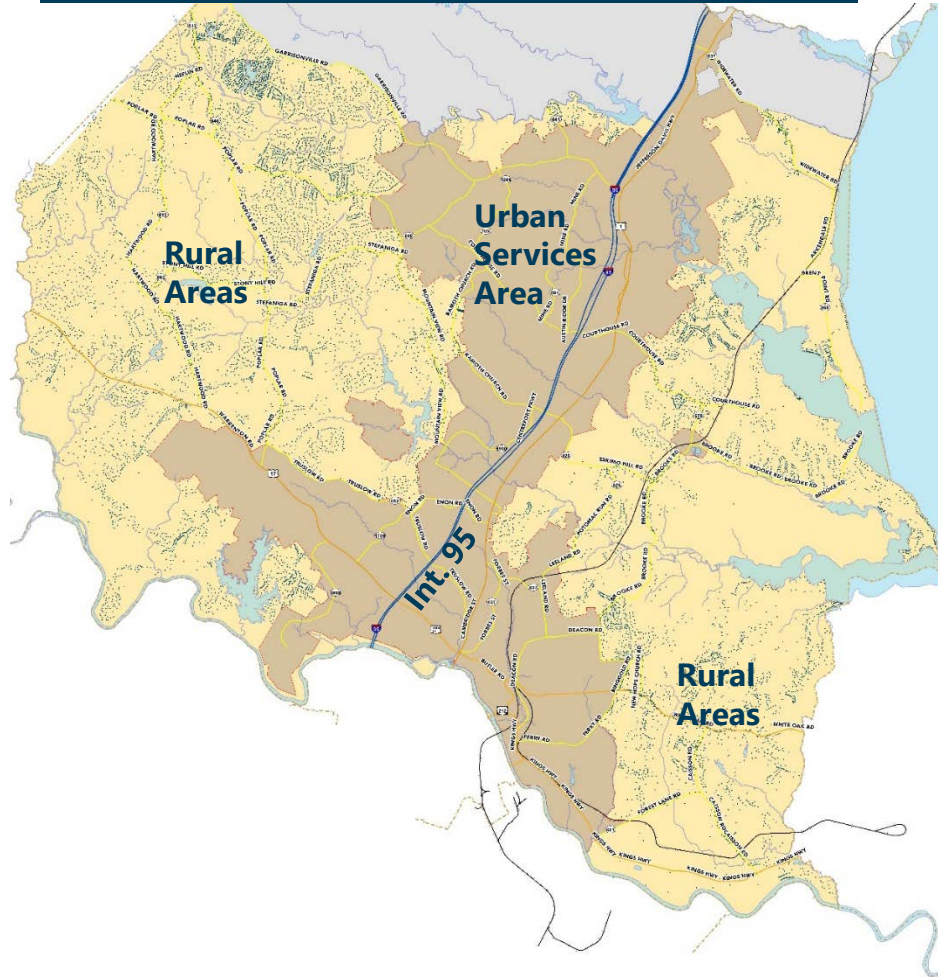
Current situation – Where are we today

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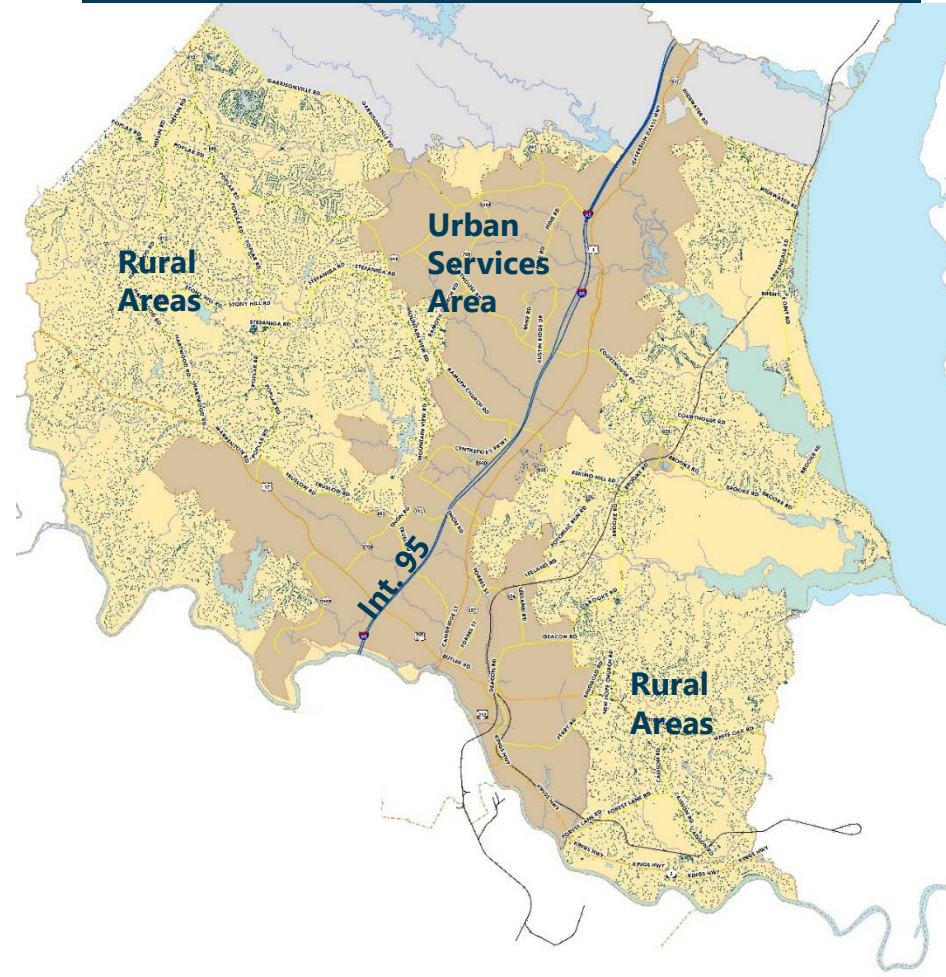
*Approved and built lots

** Approved Units in Active
Projects that are Unbuilt

Where we are today in the rural areas



What Current Zoning Allows at Full Buildout



Current situation – Pressing concerns

Public Safety

- Higher response times; increased travel and limited routes
- lack of readily available water sources
- Leads to increased equipment costs

Schools

- One Stafford school located outside the Urban Services Area
- Results in lengthy school bus trip times for children

Infrastructure

- Rural roads pose capacity and safety issues
- Utilities encounter constraints to extending water and sewer

Broadband access is limited in rural areas

Another guidance tool is the Board's 2040 Vision and Strategic Plan.

This plan includes a long-term desired state achieved with the help of short-term priorities.

Background - Strategic Plan

Healthy Growth



Desired Future State - 2040

HEALTHY GROWTH

Stafford County is a well planned community. Healthy growth is channeled into Targeted Growth Areas, allowing the County to focus infrastructure improvements to efficiently serve the citizens of Stafford with levels of service that enhance their quality of life.

Additionally, Stafford's approach protects the County's natural and historic resources, open space, and farmland, preserving the rural nature of the County and allowing it to prosper



BOARD OF SUPERVISORS THREE YEAR PRIORITIES

1. Identify and execute growth management strategies that align our Comprehensive Plan and infrastructure (i.e. roads, broadband, schools, water and sewer) without negatively impacting taxation.
 - Incentivize growth in the Targeted Growth Areas (TGA).
 - Evaluate zoning outside areas served by public water and sewer to maintain the rural character of the County.

Board of Supervisors Three Year Priorities

Identify and execute growth management strategies that align with Comprehensive Plan:

- *Incentivize growth in the Targeted Growth Areas*
- *Evaluate zoning outside areas served by public water and sewer*

Healthy Growth



Growth Area Initiatives/Incentives

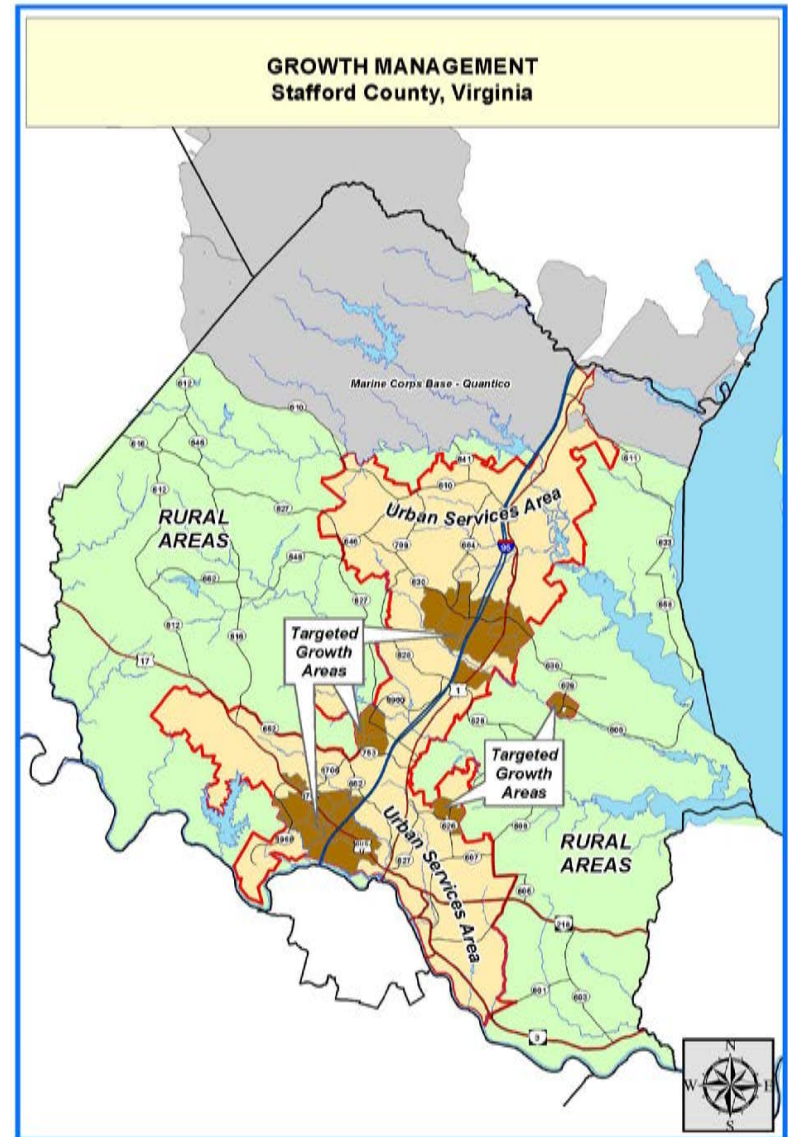
Stafford:

- Targeted Growth Areas/Urban Development Areas (UDA)
- Area master plans
- Transfer of Dev. Rights (TDR)

Peer Counties:

- Pro-active infill/redevelopment investments
- Public/private partnerships
- Pro-active zoning changes
- Density bonuses for urban objectives
- Higher public service levels

Healthy Growth



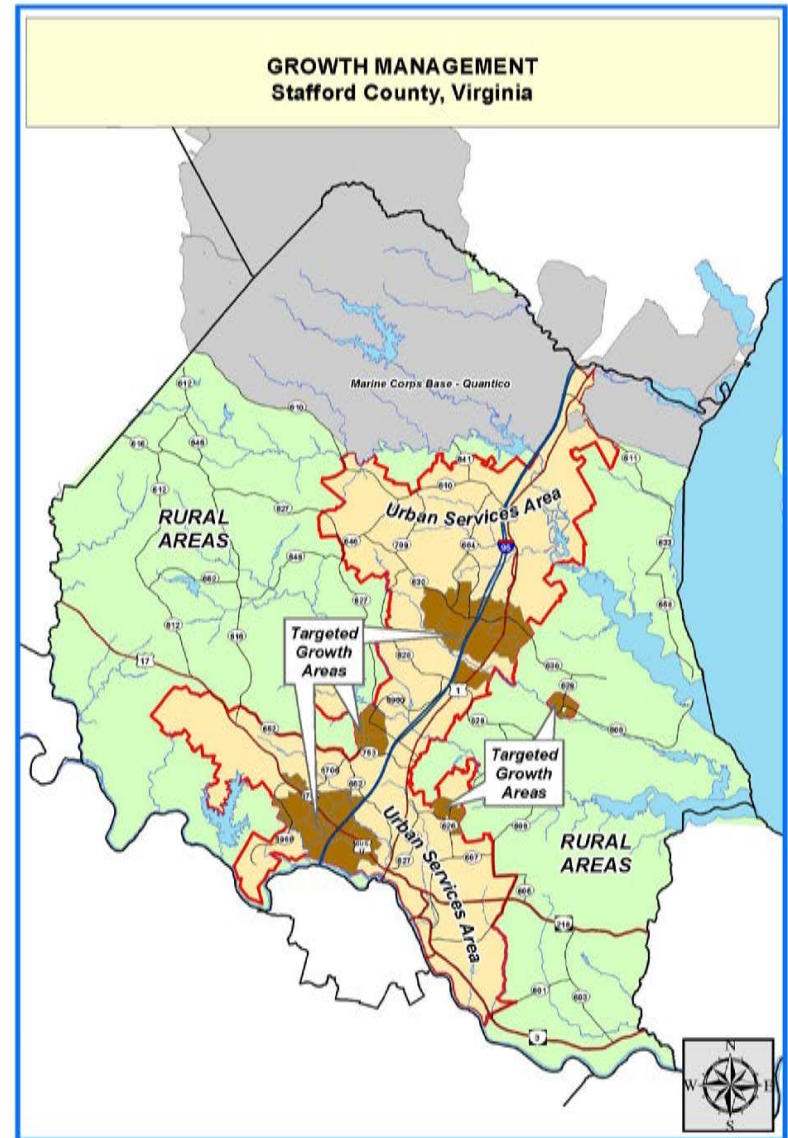
Rural Area Protection/Preservation

Stafford:

- TDRs
- Purchase of Dev. Rights (PDR)
- Land Use (Use Value) Taxation

Peer Counties:

- Facilitate voluntary easements/partner with Land Trusts
- Rural economic dev. – agri-business/agri-tourism
- Voluntary Ag./Forestal Districts
- Resource protection based open space/easements
- Dedicated revenues for PDRs



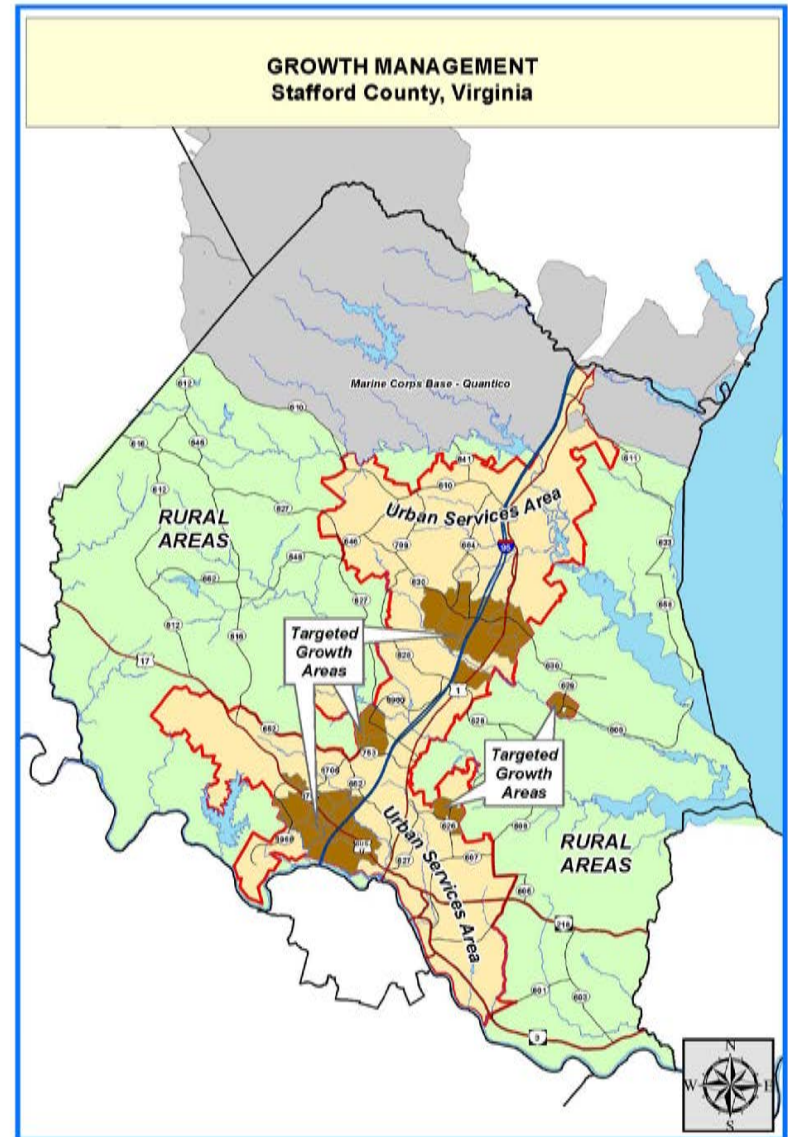
Rural Zoning/ Development Rights

Stafford:

- 1 lot per 3 acres, some clustering

Peer Counties:

- Larger min. lot size
- Acreage per lot increases with size of parcel
- Resource protection based clustering/dedicated open space



Who We've Listened To



Stakeholder Interviews

Monday, April 8

- Stafford County Farm Bureau
- Agriculture Industry/Farmers
- Large and medium-sized property owners
- Developers
- Residential Builders
- NoVa Conservation Trust
- ***10 interviews took place***

Who We've Listened To



Roundtable Discussion

Wednesday, April 10

- Homeowners Association Members
- Quantico Community Liaison
- Commercial Banker
- General Contractor
- PTO
- Friends of the Rappahannock
- Large and medium-sized property owners
- Realtor
- Residential Builders
- ***20+ participants between two sessions***

What We Heard



General Themes

- Create fair alternative financial resources and encourage public/private solutions
- Cluster development can work, but it needs to be implemented better
- Streamline the development process in the Targeted Growth Area (TGA)
- Prioritize infrastructure investment and improvements in TGA
- A-1 zoning should not change
- Focus on incentives
- Strong advocacy for property rights

What We Heard



General Themes

- Preference for programs that would allow rural landowners to monetize their assets without residential development
- Difficult for local developers to compete with National companies
- Focus on walkable, mixed-use development
- ***Recognition that this “is not easy”***
- ***Recognize the reality that growth is not going to stop***

Next steps: Board Consideration of Public Input

- The information gathered during the public engagement process will be presented to the Board at the May 7, 2019 Board meeting.
- The Board will consider the input and hold a joint work session with the Planning Commission to determine the next steps in the process. The Board is waiting for the results of this process before they take further action.

To keep updated, visit: <https://staffordcountyva.gov/healthygrowth>

Thank you!

[**www.staffordcountyva.gov/healthygrowth**](https://www.staffordcountyva.gov/healthygrowth)



in cooperation with



Making the shift

The Board has provided direction in the Healthy Growth priority of the strategic plan and is looking for an action plan to identify and execute growth management strategies that align our Comprehensive Plan and infrastructure without negatively affecting taxation in two focus areas:

- Incentivize growth in the Targeted Growth Areas (TGA)
- Evaluate zoning outside areas served by public water and sewer to maintain the rural character of the County

Community Questions

1. Is there anything from the presentation that resonates with you?
2. From your experience and perspective, what initiatives would incentivize and encourage the quality of life for citizens in the Targeted Growth Areas consistent with the desired urban form?
3. From your experience and perspective, what zoning and rural preservation initiatives could move us toward the desired character in the rural areas as called for in the Comprehensive Plan?
4. **What are up to five priorities, opportunities, or concerns that everyone at your table agree with?**

Community Questions

1. Is there anything from the presentation that resonates with you?

Community Questions

2. From your experience and perspective, what initiatives would incentivize and encourage the quality of life for citizens in the Targeted Growth Areas consistent with the desired urban form?

Community Questions

3. From your experience and perspective, what zoning and rural preservation initiatives could move us toward the desired character in the rural areas as called for in the Comprehensive Plan?

Community Questions

4. What are five priorities, opportunities, or concerns that everyone at your table agree with?

APPENDIX F: ONLINE COMMENTS ON HEALTHY GROWTH

Q1 Please provide your input on the Healthy Growth initiative. Remember to keep your comment focused on the questions below: What do you attribute as the cause to the greater than desired amount of development in rural areas? What types of initiatives do you think would incentivize and encourage the quality of life for citizens in Targeted Growth Areas consistent with a more urban form? What type of zoning and rural preservation initiatives could move the County toward the desired preservation of rural character in Stafford's Comprehensive Plan for the future? What does land preservation mean to you and what does it look like in your opinion?

Answered: 39 Skipped: 0

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	The amount of growth is clearly due to the zoning and regulations imposed by the board of supervisors. They control what builders can and can't do. We should have more park areas with wooded areas and paths paid for but not controlled by builders. And not just areas that are drainage or power line areas. Builders should be required to leave larger percentages of trees and not be allowed to raze areas and totally change the drainage structure. Drainage is a huge issue in recent developments and needs to be addressed. The amount of traffic and the timing of lights on route 610 and 1 needs to be addressed. It often takes me as long to go 3 miles to get on 95 as it does to go 15 miles on 95 to get to work. Neighborhood Roads are overused as cut through as a result. Leading to lots of traffic through neighborhoods and roads full of potholes. There should be ordinances to control cut through traffic and enforcement of them to protect families who live in high density areas.	4/28/2019 9:03 PM

Comments on Healthy Growth

2	<p>I am not sure that the very focused questions on the website are helpful - while land preservation is a key issue, there are others, and it is not clear to me that it is reasonable to strive for "preservation of rural character" as a primary goal. Green space, yes. Rural character, in a County that is basically dominated by the main north-south interstate highway on the eastern seaboard, may be an unreachable goal. This is especially true since the I-95 corridor provides access (it should not, but that is a national/state planning failure that the County can do little to influence) to residential areas that are now (and for the foreseeable future) exurbs of DC. I am very concerned about the approach that the County is taking to growth, and I have been for most of the nearly 20 years I've been here. I am especially concerned when I see developers, bankers, builders, landowners being referred to as "stakeholders" and hardly any reference to taxpayers or residents of the County. Including HOAs is probably the right move, but the concerns of those operating the association are VERY different from the concerns of the residents (I spent years as a board member and HOA president, so I can speak from experience). When I am running a VA corporation with fiduciary responsibility for a few hundred homes and the associated common properties, what is at the top of my mind is different than what concerns me as an individual homeowner and taxpayer. It is even more different when one accounts for the differences between HOAs that have substantial common property and amenities (clubhouse, sports facility, pool), and those like my neighborhood which has a stormwater management area and nothing else (like the majority in the southeast of the County). This is driven home especially hard when I see that the HOAs that I can identify (about 50% based on the list you forwarded) are almost exclusively from north of Courthouse and west of I-95. I saw no representation from a large portion of the County along Brooke and White Oak Roads. I think that leaves out a substantial perspective in this question. I am less concerned with "maintaining rural character" than "maintaining quality of life in the County". Growth is inevitable - I've no problem with that - it is a reality. In addition, property owners should not be excessively limited or burdened in what they can do with their property. It is their property, and they should get the benefit of that ownership. What is not inevitable is that growth create traffic problems. It also should not be inevitable that taxes must rise to support growth - if we handled our needs with x/head before, why do we need 2x/head to do so now?? Taxes rise during growth because the costs of growth are borne by County residents, rather than being part of the costs of development. Property owners should get the benefit of their property. Developers should be able to make a profit off their work. But neither should be able to do so because costs they create by realizing value from their property or profit for their development work are subsidized by taxpayers in the County who derive no benefit from either, and in fact often deal with very negative impacts in the form of traffic, school crowding, etc. Infrastructure changes, improvements, revisions, are required to support changes due to growth. Current residents and taxpayers should not have to pay for those infrastructure changes, and should not have to suffer because those changes are not accomplished, or are long delayed like several of the current improvement projects in the County. It is not only fair to ensure that new entrants and those profiting from growth pay the costs of growth, it is patently unfair to do anything else. I am very concerned that the approach in the past from the Board has been to consider those costs something that needs to be borne by the County as a whole, and not by new entrants or those making the money from the growth. That is the single most important change that needs to be made in Stafford County's approach to growth.</p>	4/27/2019 5:43 PM
3	First of all your questions are designed to make Stafford another Fairfax	4/26/2019 6:06 PM
4	<p>! I believe the greater than desired amount of development in rural areas is due to the past voting practices of the BOS. I believe attorney's have made it possible as well. 2 To improve quality of life, clean up these poor areas on Rt 1. It's a main corridor and our main eye sore in Stafford. Take "surveys" of the kinds of businesses or services people want in Stafford and share that. Make an incentive to start those businesses. Put something to the schools for students to develop and run for internships. 3 - Instead of allowing homes one for 3 acres, offer 1 for 10 acres. Be wary of changing the zoning of properties. Plan with a vision of what you want things to look like and how it will work. Don't just build and then fix. 4 - Land preservation in my opinion is stop allowing builders to just come in and clear cut properties for homes. Leave trees! It helps with the look of neighborhoods; privacy and even HVAC!</p>	4/26/2019 3:35 PM

Comments on Healthy Growth

5	<p>1. The qty of home both SQFT and land lot size as compared to what you can purchase further north. Also, the tax rate is lower here vs in northern VA. 2. The Parks and Rec need to have much better programs, similar to what Loudon County has- more camp programs and programs such as Parent's Night out- residents pay for the programs as they use them so the cost to the county is not that large. 3. The area around 17 and Falmouth to be redeveloped with an entertainment center on the south side of 17. The 17 area looks horrible. The area should be redeveloped with an entertainment complex similar to One Loudoun. It is a mini walkable "down town area" with condo style apartments above small shops. Leasing needs to work with local leaders to canvas some of the rural areas within a 25 mile radius to have a mixture of local businesses and some of the more national retailers. The Aquia Towne Center also needs the same kind of work. Whatever developer works on this they need to be large enough that they can leverage their other properties to get these properties filled. If you go with too small of a developer they will not have enough relationships to get the centers filled. 4. Rural preservation needs to have parks with maintained trails that people can walk on and use. Mosquito infested drainage areas are not "land preservation". It would also be nice if some areas along the Potomac could be opened up for commerce to have some recreational/ entertainment areas along the river.</p>	4/26/2019 10:34 AM
6	1. Poor planning by county and BOS. Figured out that we had a problem, way to late.	4/25/2019 9:46 PM
7	1. Poor planning by county and BOS. Figured out that we had a problem, way to late.	4/25/2019 9:46 PM
8	<p>1. Developer and special interest greed willing to deforest our rural county in order to maximize their profits. Bought and paid for county supervisors, often developers or married to developers, willing to make back room deals for money. Short sighted planning. The false assertion that development is "progress." Anyone only needs to look at all the suburban sprawl, strip malls, housing developments, declining schools, and traffic to know that development is not "progress." It only creates a few short term jobs, then the land is used up, the quality of life decreases for everyone and the developers move on to the next patch of green. 2. None. Stop all re-zoning. Stop. Stafford County is full. Work on creating a better quality of life by not bring more people to the county.</p>	4/25/2019 8:02 PM
9	The Urban Services area is already too crowded so building there is not the answer to our problems. We especially do not need more apartments and townhouses. We have enough houses already. Preserve the rural part of the county by creating much larger lots. Daily life in Stafford has become miserable with traffic, construction and overcrowded everything. We have so many developments on the books we dont need to approve anything else.	4/25/2019 7:47 PM
10	<p>Here's the only thing you need to hear. Stop approving developments. Stop rezoning. One house per 3 acres is too dense. Stop letting the developers destroy our county. They are too powerful in this county. Their right to make a living does not supersede our right to a decent quality of life. Protect our way if life. Stop being so concerned about people who don't live here. We are not obligated to build an endless supply of housing for them. Protect our county from being paved over. Consider that our property values are being depressed by overdevelopment. Muster the courage to do what is right.</p>	4/25/2019 7:34 PM
11	<p>1. The cause of the greater amount than desired development in rural areas is the by-right ratio. Change the ratio to one house per 10 acres or more. 2. We should not incentivize any residential growth at this point. Our infrastructure cannot support more development and our citizens do not want to live in a county that is a sea of rooftops. We do not want an urban lifestyle like Nova. The primary focus of the BOS should be denying all A-1 rezoning, even in the urban services areas. We are overcrowded enough already. 3. Change the ratio for by-right development to one house per ten acres. DOWN ZONE ASAP. 4. Land preservation means keeping as much habitat from being paved over as possible and preserving the rural character that makes Stafford a special place to live. If that means business don't want to come to Stafford, then we are fine with that. 5. In the future, when you want input from citizens, let them give it without major developers and real estate brokers going from table to table trying to convince people that Stafford needs more houses.</p>	4/25/2019 7:20 PM

Comments on Healthy Growth

12	Stafford lacks a venue(s) that contribute to community building. For children & teenagers there aren't many entertainment options. It's wrong for a county of this size to lack healthy entertainment options. Teens must go to either Fredericksburg or Potomac Mills, & a new movie theater in Stafford is only the beginning. Esthetically, Stafford for the most part is an eyesore. When new people move to Stafford they should feel a sense of pride in the community. Aside from some housing developments, there is no community. As of now it's just a place to live, not a place to call home. People need a reason to invest in a community. It seems the county does the minimum to just keep things functional. Residents spend more time and money shopping in other cities. Stafford needs to give people a reason to want to be here, not just because housing is cheaper. Start with making Stafford beautiful, attract boutiques, fine dinning, not more of the same carry-out restaurants or mediocre bars. Give small businesses more incentives.	4/25/2019 4:50 PM
13	1. Punishment as opposed to incentivizing. Incentivize where you want development by making it easier and/or cheaper to build there than the other places. 2. Incentivize businesses to build there. If they build it, they will come, but you are currently punishing builders and developers. 3. You can do nothing other than transfer development rights to encourage preservation. Rather, make it so advantageous to build elsewhere that the developers don't have a choice to make. 4. Land preservation means preserving an individual owner's right to use their land as they please. It is in fact their land and not held in common with their fellow citizens. Anyone with land never wants to dictate to others what they can and can't do. It is people with nothing who expect something from everyone else.	4/25/2019 11:22 AM
14	There is no healthy growth in Stafford co. I live off 608 and in the last 10 years you've built houses along the left side. No 608 has water on the shoulder and in the road all the time It could be sewage running down the hills. You people don't care. You just won't money put in your pocket. Your heLthy growth sucks.	4/25/2019 8:42 AM
15	1) Over-population.	4/24/2019 9:47 PM
16	1. Stafford County government is greedy and get money from housing developers. 2. Ones that incentivize small business to invest in the area—restaurants and other commerce. Also bringing in quality big business like Wegmans or Trader Joe's. Finally build roads and schools that can support growth within the community rather than stretching existing resources. 3. First, no one knows what the comprehensive plan is—you either don't want residents to know or have no idea how to market your message 4. Land preservation means leaving land as is. Preserving land that could have a negative impact on nature (water, animals, etc). Finally whomever thought this was an appropriate survey is an idiot who has never written survey questions. They aren't written at an appropriate reading level, place a high working memory demand on the respondents and assume a level of knowledge about topics that only someone with expertise in these issues would understand. I'm guessing Stafford County doesn't actually want answers to their questions. Recommend hiring a researcher, psychologist, consumer experience expert to gather useful information. Good luck getting useful, representative data.	4/24/2019 8:14 PM
17	Some people want more development in rural areas, so the 1. "... greater than desired amount" may not be a true statement at all. I would offer lower building fees in areas planned for higher growth, as Stafford will not have to build or maintain roads.	4/24/2019 5:02 PM
18	1. Development of the rural areas is largely due to family farms being sold to developers. Children of the Old Stafford Farmers, may not have had the ability, the resources or the need to continue the family tradition. in addition many families sold the Stafford farms and moved to other jurisdictions to continue farming where the growth and population were lower. Augustine is one example. 2. Not sure incentives are needed. The County grew leaps and bounds without any including but not limited to water and sewer, parks, and of course sidewalks god forbid we forget sidewalks oh and street lights 3. Maintaining rural character is a little late, not sure how to address the future unless increasing the lot sizes significantly is and option. 4. Crows nest is an example, but 30 yrs to late. In addition, this County as never been proactive, for example not many people are aware the Regional Airport was constructed and opened with a municipal water source that's right an airport with Fire Hydrants! Even though Public Safety is listed as a priority its all smoke and mirrors. This year additional fire and EMS stations were staffed which looks good on paper, what is not shown is other units staffing was reduced to accommodate this. The volunteer fire and ems staffing is decreasing nationwide, in Stafford most volunteer station staff between 0-30% which is a failure. It's time the County realize they are one emergency away for a tragedy. You see one residential fire will exhaust the Fire resources in Stafford. it widely known that if two residential fires occur with in minutes of each other the second fire may not receive any fire apparatus from Stafford County. In fact when this as occurred in the past the second fire only received EMS units from Stafford no fire suppression units. During the meeting someone mentioned PPEA lets just leave that alone, its been linked to failure in Stafford and other jurisdictions.	4/24/2019 2:09 PM

Comments on Healthy Growth

19	Development of the rural areas is largely due to family farms being sold to developers. Children of the Old Stafford Farmers, may not have had the ability, the resources or the need to continue the family tradition. in addition many families sold the Stafford farms and moved to other jurisdictions to continue farming where the growth and population were lower. Augustine is one example.	4/24/2019 1:43 PM
20	Growth is inevitable. We moved here for cost of living. Truthfully, we do not have plans to stay because we are so disappointed and frustrated with stafford county's inability to anticipate and handle growth as it comes. It allows growth and then expects there to be no pain. It doesn't accommodate for growth in the form of infrastructure or commercial development. It doesn't keep tax money in Stafford because of the lack of commercial development from what I can see.	4/24/2019 8:23 AM
21	Growth is inevitable. We moved here for cost of living. Truthfully, we do not have plans to stay because we are so disappointed and frustrated with stafford county's inability to anticipate and handle growth as it comes. It allows growth and then expects there to be no pain. It doesn't accommodate for growth in the form of infrastructure or commercial development. It doesn't keep tax money in Stafford because of the lack of commercial development from what I can see.	4/24/2019 8:23 AM
22	Growth is inevitable. We moved here for cost of living. Truthfully, we do not have plans to stay because we are so disappointed and frustrated with stafford county's inability to anticipate and handle growth as it comes. It allows growth and then expects there to be no pain. It doesn't accommodate for growth in the form of infrastructure or commercial development. It doesn't keep tax money in Stafford because of the lack of commercial development from what I can see.	4/24/2019 8:23 AM
23	I believe Stafford did a great job reaching out for public input.	4/24/2019 8:20 AM
24	1) simply money and greed with no accountability.2) actual development of quality business and retail in a fast pace with aesthetically pleasing design vs allowing developers to leave vacant retail space look so trashy and "urban" drug land. 3 give initiative to farm land ownership to use it as farmland 4) land preservation comes in two ways using it to encourage outdoor public use in a green manner or land preserved for rural use undeveloped. Something has to be fixed in this county because business and retail and restaurants are still building and developing in Fairfax Henrico Fredericksburg spotsylvania they all of any quality skip this county and our schools are over crowded and we have fewer and fewer actually licensed teachers of quality staying here our home values will crash and are already less desirable as this becomes more apparent.	4/24/2019 7:39 AM
25	This county is so focused on becoming part of "Northern" Virginia and that is leading to the approval of many homes and businesses that are just not needed. The other part of that problem is Stafford wants to be like Northern VA but refuses to institute a tax rate that actually supports that desire. This county cannot continue to function with such a low tax rate. Our schools are suffering, road conditions, quality of life, desire to live in Stafford are all suffering. Stop zoning land for high density neighborhoods. Stop approving business development for more fast food chains, gas stations, storage facilities, auto parts stores. There are so many empty commercial buildings that could be used. Finish one project (ie Aquia Towne Center) before you start another (ie The Garrison). Use the land we have to build more parks with biking and walking trails. Build a true community recreation center that is free or affordable for all residents (the Rouse Center doesn't fit this function). This county will not survive by continuing to allow more people to live here at a low tax rate and business to establish here by granting ridiculous tax incentives.	4/24/2019 6:23 AM
26	1. A corrupt Board of Supervisors and the rezoning of agricultural land for massive subdivisions. 2. Infrastructure. Stafford needs to focus on improving existing roads and creating new secondary ones. The traffic is horrific and the quality of life has declined so much in the last 3-4 years. We also are in desperate need of a high school in the south part of the county and additional schools. 3 and 4. Not approving any more subdivisions. Overbuilding has caused nothing but misery for the residents of this county.	4/24/2019 6:17 AM
27	1) a county that was unprepared to address growth and approved projects just to bring money in without thinking through what the county actually needs. 2) walkability and easy access to tranportstion like slug lot or rail. 3) consider a paradigm shift- Stafford County has moved away from being a rural area. High growth is happening! 4) land preservation is different from keeping a rural character. Green space, particularly for recreation, and historic preservation are important to encourage thriving communities. Trails through these spaces encourage active living while allowing land to remain undeveloped.	4/24/2019 5:58 AM
28	Stop building until we can afford to adjust roads and schools for the growth!!!!!! There should be a plan in place to generate revenue but there is not - stop encouraging development that we cannot accommodate with our current roads and schools!!!	4/24/2019 5:43 AM

Comments on Healthy Growth

29	1. greater development of rural areas is out of greed - truly, otherwise the developers would invest something for the "greater" of Stafford County (i.e. investment in movie theaters, public spaces, bike trailways, walking paths etc. - and I don't think that is happening at all)	4/24/2019 5:27 AM
30	1. Lack of planning and greed	4/24/2019 1:17 AM
31	Just quit approving neighborhoods, apartments, and townhouses. Enough.	4/23/2019 11:30 PM
32	1. Poor planning by boards of supervisors who act in their personal interest rather than the interest of constituents. 2. Attractions that keep resident dollars local. We have no Costco, no Sam's, very limited restaurants and shopping which for ease often take my family north or south of Stafford where I can accomplish everything at one time. 3. I love the effort to protect areas and increase them. Attractive green spaces are desired in every community so not just focusing on land that's unusable and protected....but rather protected spaced that can be used like more parks, trails, etc within protected areas. 4. See #3	4/23/2019 11:09 PM
33	1. I feel that the growth in the county has been created by the board of supervisors not having a clear goal and plan. They have seen dollar signs and that is it. 2. In order in increase the quality of life in Stafford as a whole the county needs to be willing to have the hard conversations about how Stafford has changed, is continuing to change, and what we need to do about it. The biggest areas of need are Educational funding, Transportation, and Public Safety. 3. Stafford does need to protect the historical areas, but also needs to do a better job of capitalizing on them. You have Ferry Farm which is right there in South Stafford but are their hotels near it, are there restaurants and other amenities near it? The answer is NO. We are also in the 21st Century, so where are the technical attributes as well? You could setup cameras in different areas along the river, at Ferry Farm itself, and even other historical sites. 4. Land preservation means protecting areas of historic and natural importance. We need parks and this can be a great tourist attraction. Stafford is unique in its makeup but I feel the county is doing a poor job managing it and in capitalizing on these unique aspects.	4/23/2019 10:50 PM
34	1. The societal combination of capitalism and consumerism while large-scale agrobusiness make farming unsustainable. But also commercial real estate developers.	4/23/2019 10:24 PM
35	Stafford could preserve some of the rural character by making the division of land for family subdivisions less costly and more simplified. Why are normal subdivision allowed to cluster yet family subdivision must be 3 acres. By allowing family subdivision to cluster there would be more open space so keeping more rural character and less costly like it is for the developers to run roads . Also in the case of a-1 land in the urban services area less costly to run water/sewer because county will no longer allow well septic in that area. Could make a difference for some landowners of making decision to sell to developers or keep land for family. Most people with A-1 land that belongs to them love their land more than money so there needs to be incentive for families to hold onto land versus selling and developers building more homes. Seems that most of the bigger parcels of land in outlying areas that have been acquired by developers/builders has been from families that inherited the land and greed is what is causing the land to be destroyed. Land preservation is just that saving land for animals to live trees to grow and streams to remain undisturbed where they are. No buying back wetland or stream areas somewhere else. How's should have to pay taxes on open land why is there no tax on hoa land money the county is giving away. Need more commercial properties to bring more money/reason for growth in targeted areas.	4/23/2019 12:39 PM
36	1.) The amount of traffic flow that comes through Stafford County on a daily basis is huge and could be taken advantage of better. The growth is going to continue and it's great if you know how to handle it. Stafford has fallen behind because of the amount of times developers take advantage of Stafford. Right now we should have a Aquia Town Center, Celebrate Virginia North, The Home Goods Mall off Centreport Pkwy, and the groundbreaking of The Garrison. Stuff needs to get done and get down NOW there is no time to wait at this point anymore, Stafford has been waiting for far to long. 2.) Target areas would heavily be 17, 610, Aquia, Stafford Courthouse, Embry Mill, Boswell Corner, and Leeland areas. They need more night life for all ages people shouldn't have to go out of Stafford to have a good night, but instead people choose Woodbridge, Fredericksburg, Fairfax, Arlington, DC, and Ashburn because they've kept up. 3.) George Washington, Crows Nest, Government Island, Expansion of Widewater State Park, and Staffords civil war park. 4.) I personally like development and urbanization because it means an area is doing good and making progress and money. It also shows that they care about the people that live there and want them to come back for more and help live up to there full potential. 5.) Loudoun County is a great county for Stafford to follow and learn from because a few years back Loudoun was the number one growing county but now we are so now it's time to follow what Loudoun did. A downtown Stafford would be a start, just like Loudoun built Loudoun One.	4/22/2019 11:02 PM

Comments on Healthy Growth

37	1. The board's incompetence at regulating sustainable growth and ensuring developers provide infrastructure UPFRONT. 2. Forcing developers to appropriately provide infrastructure improvements BEFORE approving their commercial and residential plans. 3. Just say no to development projects that would negatively impact rural areas - I mean, how hard is this? 4. Land preservation is not selling off land to developers for money just to watch traffic increase, schools overcrowd, rezoning students and disrupting them and their parents' lives, etc. Plan long term and stick to it.	4/22/2019 8:16 PM
38	I would like to see more bike and running trails. Northern Stafford lacks this. Fredericksburg has some nice trails but to get there from n. Stafford it can take more than twenty minutes. Many people when looking to move to an area look for areas to walk, bike or run that is safe.	4/22/2019 7:40 PM
39	The question of land preservation will be in the eye of the beholder. Let us determine what Stafford should look like in 5, 10, 15, 20, 25, 30 years from now. What is "greater than desired amount of development in rural areas?" Not sure what is meant by that. Do the supervisors have a vision that has been articulated? If they do its not readily view-able on the internet. Lets face it, landowners want to do what they want with their land so I applaud the healthy growth initiative, but unless Stafford County starts charging the impact fees necessary for infrastructure for the development, the county will become like some counties to the north where growth just happened and now the residents have to suffer.	4/19/2019 5:25 PM

DESIRED FUTURE STATE – 2040

HEALTHY GROWTH

Potential Growth Management Strategies

CONTEXT:

On November 7, 2018 the Board of Supervisors adopted a new vision statement and strategic plan for the County. The vision statement was entitled “Stafford County – 2040 – Where heart, home and a healthy business environment come together in one community”. To implement the vision, seven strategic priorities were developed to be implemented within the next three years. One of those areas of focus was to address “Healthy Growth”. Priority 1.1 is to “Identify and execute growth management strategies that align our Comprehensive Plan and infrastructure (i.e., roads, broadband, schools, water and sewer) without negatively impacting taxation. Strategies identified were: 1) Incentivize growth in the Targeted Growth Areas (TGA); and 2) Evaluate zoning outside areas served by public water and sewer to maintain the rural character of the County.

This paper is intended to provide recommendations for potential growth management strategies to incentivize development to locate in the TGAs and strategies to reduce pressures to convert rural areas for new housing developments. Background information will examine the current situation relative to growth in the County. Past development practices that were used to attempt to incentivize growth into the Urban Services Area (USA) and TGAs and slow the pace of rural development will be summarized. A survey of peer locality development strategies will be provided. State Code provisions will be identified for potential incentives to meet these goals. The conclusion will include several recommendations for policy and development ordinance changes that can be considered as new growth management strategies leading to the envisioned Healthy Growth.

BACKGROUND:

Stafford County is a locality in transition. The once rural county has seen substantial growth since the opening of Interstate 95 in the late 1960s. Being located just 45 miles south of the nation’s capital, it has become a prime location for exurban commuters to employment in the Washington D.C. metropolitan area. The County established its first subdivision ordinance in 1962 and zoning ordinance in 1964. The County’s first vision for growth and development was created with the 1975 Comprehensive Plan. At that time, substantial growth had not occurred, but efforts were made to centralize areas for suburban densities.

During the 1970s, the County realized the importance of its location relative to the Washington D.C. metropolitan area and the potential affects it could have on the rural landscape. Much of the County was zoned for agricultural use. The Board of Supervisors, in 1978, comprehensively zoned the County as a means to facilitate growth into its northern and southern designated growth areas where public sewer and water utilities existed. Rural residential areas were recognized where there were pockets of existing housing outside of the growth areas. This was reflected in the Comprehensive Plan of 1979. That plan

acknowledged that the number of building permits for new home construction and corresponding population increase at that time out-paced population projections made by official state agencies. There was a desire to direct this growth to the two growth areas to prevent excessive suburban sprawl.

During the 1980s, the County's population and housing stock continued to grow. The community began to voice its concerns over the specific threats that growing development was having to the rural character of the County. Goal 4 of the 1988 Land Use Plan of the Comprehensive Plan stipulates that the rural character of the County should be preserved by encouraging growth in the Growth Area while protecting the rural areas from suburban and urban development densities. The Land Use Plan discussed the provision of public utilities and infrastructure improvements as a means to direct growth into the Growth Area where substantial growth in businesses, industry, and population was anticipated.

The sense of urgency about the impacts of growth and development on the rural areas of the County continued through the 1990s and 2000s. It is reflected in a citizens' report titled "Life in Stafford in the Year 2020, The Citizens' Vision," which is the result of a 1995 survey sent to all Stafford County homeowners. The report makes one of its primary goals to preserve the rural character and recommended that maintaining the rural character of the County should be the guiding principle in land use decisions. In 1997 and 1998, the County worked on a County-wide Land Use Study. That study recommended a number of growth management strategies for the suburban areas of the county to include cluster development; increase the width of townhouse lots, establish architectural standards, make accommodations for retirement housing, and increase the allowable density in the PD-2 district to 5.0 dwelling units per acre as long as the mix of units included at least 50 percent single-family detached homes. The Board adopted development control policies for parks and recreation that applied to all residential zoning reclassifications and cluster subdivisions. Those policies imposed minimum acreage and recreational amenity requirements for new neighborhoods.

Throughout the 2000s, the Board of Supervisors made a number of policy changes and amending the County's development regulations to address the acceleration of housing development in the County. Those attempts proposed such things as increasing the cost of proffer guidelines, implementing transportation impact fees, requiring developments to provide recreational amenities, requiring the use of allocated (net) density for residential zoning districts rather than gross density based on the entire size of a parcel, and reducing development density of residential zoning districts by 50% in order to encourage cluster development. The Board also encouraged mixed use developments where the commercial component of a project could help to off-set the fiscal impacts of new residential development.

During this time period, the Board of Supervisors made a number of unsuccessful attempts to amend the County's development regulations to address the acceleration of housing development in the rural area of the County. Those attempts proposed such things as placing a time limit on how many lots could be subdivided from a property over a given period of time, requiring property be rezoned to a new 3-acre rural residential zoning district in order to build a house on a property, changing the zoning of the rural areas to a minimum 10-acre lot size while allowing a rezoning for 3-acre lots in a new rural residential zoning district, implementing a tax credit program for voluntarily agreeing not to develop

property (it would have worked similar to the land-use tax program without the requirement to pay a roll-back tax), increasing the minimum lot size for conventional subdivisions to 6 acres while allowing development on 3-acre lots through a cluster development option, and using a sliding scale (the number of lots yielded decreased as a percentage as the size of the parent parcel increased). All of those attempts to curb residential subdivisions in the rural areas failed due to strong opposition from property owners, developers and home builders.

In 2006, the Comprehensive Plan was amended to create an Economic Development Strategic Plan. That plan included creating visions for redevelopment of key areas of the County (Boswells Corner, Courthouse, Southern Gateway, and historic Falmouth). Redevelopment Area Plans were prepared for these areas envisioning mixed use development at urban densities not seen before in the County. The Redevelopment Area Plans focused on creating urban villages that were to be walkable livable communities with commercial development and housing in close proximity. The planning efforts helped to result in creating new mixed-use zoning districts such as RDA-1 Redevelopment Area -1 Boswells Corner) and P-TND (Planned Traditional Neighborhood Development).

Acknowledging the continued need to preserve rural lands of the County and the controversies generated by attempts to change zoning standards in the rural areas, the Board of Supervisors established a Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) program in 2007. The PDR program takes a voluntary approach to land preservation where the County and a willing land owner enter into a conservation easement agreement to preserve the land from further subdivision and future residential development. This program directly involves the use of local tax dollars and matching funds from state and federal agencies to fund the purchase of the easements.

During the decade after 2010, planning efforts continued towards place making. The Commonwealth of Virginia stepped in to require all localities like Stafford to change its Comprehensive Plans to include Urban Development Areas (UDAs). The Commonwealth acknowledged the shrinking ability to fund new road construction. The UDAs were intended to accommodate the future growth of the locality at an urban scale of density taking advantage of existing road infrastructure that could support mixed use development, walkable neighborhoods and public transit. In addition to amending the Comprehensive Plan, state code at the time required localities to update their zoning codes to allow for the mixed use developments. The County in turn created the UD zoning districts. In doing so, it set maximum residential densities at the minimum recommended levels as identified by the state.

Stafford County, like rest of the United States, was not immune to the Great Recession. From 2008 to 2012 housing growth slowed but did not stop. Population and housing projections were adjusted in the 2010 Comprehensive Plan to reflect the new reality of that time. For the first time in its Comprehensive Plan, the County identified an acceptable level of growth for the Urban Services Area (USA). Policy 1.2.11 in the 2010 Comprehensive Plan stipulated that “At least 80 percent of the future cumulative residential growth should be located inside the Urban Service Area....” This policy is used as a measurable tool to gauge the effectiveness of the growth management strategies being used. Another policy in the 2010 Comprehensive Plan recognized the importance of individual property rights while still considering land use policy changes. Policy 1.1.7 stated “This plan should be implemented in respect to

and in consideration of private property rights”. In continuation of the efforts for voluntary land preservation and incentivizing development in the USA, the County adopted a Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) program. The TDR program allows a property owner in a designated rural area of the County to record a conservation easement on the property, sever the development right, and voluntarily transfer that development density to a project in a designated area within the Urban Services Area.

Similar to the national economy, the County’s economic conditions significantly improved after 2012. By the year 2017, significant concerns began to reappear regarding the increased pace of residential growth, especially in the rural areas of the County. The County saw an increase in by-right development in its rural areas and this became a big concern to the Board of Supervisors. Since 1978, the minimum lot size for residential development in the rural areas of the County has not changed. As part of its long term land preservation strategy in 2012, the County amended its cluster development standards allowing for reduced lot sizes at the same development density in exchange for open space lands. The Board observed, however, that the design of these rural cluster developments did little to retain the rural character, possibly incentivized development in the rural areas, and in some cases appeared to increase the number of lots that could be yielded through avoidance of unbuildable environmentally sensitive. The Board of Supervisors took action in March of 2018 to limit the location of rural cluster developments to areas adjacent to the Urban Services Area where public sewer and water utilities could be extended if the private systems on the relatively small lots failed.

Growth pressures are likely to continue into the future. The Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG) in 2016 published a cooperative forecast model report. This report projected employment and population growth for the COG member localities through the year 2045. Stafford County is not a member of COG but is physically located adjacent to Prince William County which is a COG member locality. The COG projections can be informative for growth trends affecting Stafford County. COG projects the region to grow by 1.5 million people in 640,000 new households and 1.1 million jobs. The number of households would increase by 38 percent and the number of new jobs would increase by 32 percent. Some of this regional growth will spill into Stafford County as it is within commuting distance to the District of Columbia and employment centers within the COG area. In 2018, the corporate entity of AMAZON announced that it would be locating part of its east coast headquarters in Arlington, Virginia employing 25,000 people. Stafford County will likely see some pressure to provide housing for this large workforce. Other spin-off activities that rely on cheaper land prices and proximity to but not within the urban core may also locate in Stafford. These types of activities may include warehouse and distribution centers and data centers. High Occupancy Toll (HOT) lanes have been extended along Interstate 95 to the south of Garrisonville. The HOT lanes will be extended throughout the County by 2025 enhancing commuter options for county residents and making the County a more desirable location for people seeking reasonable priced housing in the Washington Metropolitan Area.

CURRENT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN:

The current Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 2016. It designated TGAs to be similar to the previous UDA areas. Fifty percent of the future growth of the county through the year 2036 should be located in

the TGAs. It retained Policy 1.2.11 meaning that new housing located in areas outside of the USA should not exceed 20% of the total projected growth by the year 2036. The 2016 Plan projects an average annual increase of approximately 1,040 dwelling units per year over the 20-year planning horizon. That correlates to 832 dwelling units per year being constructed within the USA (520 in the TGAs and 312 in Suburban Areas). No more than 208 new homes are to be built in the rural areas each year.

The 2016 Comprehensive Plan recommends that the location and rate of growth be tracked for compliance with the land use goals. On a semi-annual basis, staff compiles a map and list of active residential developments. It tracks where the development projects are located relative to inside of the USA, TGAs and outside the USA in the rural areas. Data from August 2017 indicates that the residential development already approved county-wide but not built equals approximately 8-years of projected growth. Approximately 24.6% of those approved dwelling units would be located outside the USA in the rural areas. More recent data from March 2018 showed this trend accelerating to 27.9% of the approved dwelling units would be located outside the USA in the rural areas. That was an increase of more than 3% over six months. As of September 2018, the percentage has not changed. 2,045 lots have been approved but yet to be built upon outside of the USA. This accommodates 10 years of projected growth based on the planned rate of approximately 200 dwellings per year in the rural areas to maintain the desired 80/20 split between urban and rural growth. Half of the projected rural growth identified in the Comprehensive Plan for the current 20-year planning horizon has already been approved and is available to be built on.

As of March 2018 and further validated in September 2018, development outside the USA in the rural areas of the County was occurring at a rate nearly 8% greater than the 2016 and 2010 Comprehensive Plans recommended. This rate of development quantifies and reinforces the concerns of the community and the Board of Supervisors regarding the pace of rural development, and the detrimental effects on the rural character of the County. Many of these detrimental effects manifest themselves in perception among residents that their quality of life is declining. Development of rural areas can give way to feelings of over-crowding, loss of traditional lifestyles and landscapes, safety concerns due to increased traffic on substandard roadways, and increased tax burden to provide services. This has contributed significantly towards the Board's strategic desire of incentivizing growth in the TGAs.

Efforts from the 1970s to the present to steer residential development away from the rural areas by promoting development within the USA and offering voluntary Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) and Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) programs have had limited success. The County's voluntary land preservation programs have not preserved land in the rural areas of the County at a comparable rate to the growth which has occurred in those same areas. Since the inception of the PDR program, 660 acres of land and 170 development rights located outside the USA has been preserved. The TDR program has preserved 132 acres and 50 development rights. This pales in comparison to the approximately 6,771 acres consumed for development and approximately 1,266 homes built in the rural areas over the same period.

The TDR program specifically has been largely underutilized since its inception in 2013, only retiring the first development rights under the program at the end of 2017. The program allows for a one-to-one

transfer of development rights. TDR is one of the few development tools the County has to directly relocate housing development from undesirable rural areas to the TGAs in the form of higher density urban development.

If done correctly, a TDR program has a huge potential to influence Healthy Growth. The current TDR program is limited in geographic area covering the Courthouse Area TGA and the Marlborough Point and Crows Nest Peninsulas. However, excluding the 50 development rights already severed and ready to be transferred, there are an additional 453 development rights that are pending severance. If all of those development rights were severed, 1,050 acres would be preserved for rural purposes and 503 new dwelling units could be built in the Courthouse TGA. There are three residential subdivisions pending in the Courthouse TGA that plan on utilizing 280 development rights. If applied on a broader scale, they may be more voluntary opportunities for long term growth management.

Much of the residential growth in the past two decades has occurred from by-right development and has not been facilitated by zoning reclassifications. Approximately 91.2% of the 20,599 new homes constructed and occupied from the years 2000 through 2018 were built by-right without being subject to a zoning reclassification. This means that the majority of new development has been taking place based on the zoning scheme established in 1978. Of the zoning reclassifications that were approved between 2000 and 2018, 6,498 dwelling units were approved and 2,649 were built. The remaining 3,846 unit to be built could accommodate 3-years of the Comprehensive Plan, projected growth. Given that 12 years of projected residential growth identified in the Comprehensive Plan has yet to be approved, the Board has a great opportunity to positively influence where the future growth will occur and what form it will take.

The Comprehensive Plan has a number of goals and policies focused on growth management and providing incentives for housing in the USA and TGAs and affecting rural growth.

Goal 1 of the 2016 Comprehensive Plan is to “*manage growth and development in a sustainable manner.*” Sustainable development is defined as “*development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.*” The Plan acknowledges that a sprawling growth pattern of low-density development, which disperses residents over a wide area, consumes resources at a rate greater than can be replenished. It identifies a number of policies to be implemented in order to incentivize growth in the USA and TGAs:

Policy 1.2.2. The County will establish measures to encourage new development within the Urban Services Area in order to reduce the growth pressure in the rural parts of the County.

Policy 1.2.8. To the extent possible, feasible and consistent with other goals of the Comprehensive Plan, the County may adopt financial and other incentives to direct development into the Targeted Growth Areas.

Policy 1.2.9. Residential density “bonuses” in the Urban Services Area, and within Targeted Growth Areas, should be tied to reductions in residential density outside the Urban Services Area.

Policy 1.3.2. The County will work with the private sector in efforts to revitalize commercial, office and industrial areas and corridors.

Policy 1.3.3. In-fill and redevelopment efforts will be encouraged in appropriate areas in the Urban Services Area, and the County's promotion will focus on Boswell's Corner, the Courthouse Area, Falmouth, and the Southern Gateway Area, as shown as Redevelopment Areas on the Land Use Plan map. Special Area plans should be adopted as elements of this Comprehensive Plan for these areas for the purpose of establishing future land use patterns, types, and intensities, and circulation and building design.

Policy 1.3.4. The County shall, where appropriate, consider alternatives to conventional zoning regulations to support a development pattern consistent with the goals and objectives of the Redevelopment Areas and allow infill development that minimizes impact on adjacent uses. Examples include performance and incentive zoning, sometimes referred to as form based codes.

Objective 1.4 stipulates that residential growth in the rural areas outside of the USA should be discouraged. This Objective has five policies that accompany it, which acknowledge that the rural areas should be characterized by large lot residential subdivisions, agricultural activities and open lands. In these rural areas, there would be significant limitations on the ability to provide public infrastructure and services and road improvements should be limited to safety improvements. Development in the rural areas should be restricted by applying the highest standards allowable under state law for building and development in agricultural areas. Below is a discussion of some of the limitations on public services:

Water Supply:

In February 2018, the County completed a Groundwater Resources Evaluation for the Piedmont Aquifer. This study was initiated by the Board of Supervisors after receiving complaints from residents regarding lack of adequate potable water supplies from recently drilled wells. The study in general concluded that within the maximum safe yield "...an additional 6,500 households within the study area could withdraw groundwater at typical rates without causing significant negative impacts to the study area's hydrologic system." While 6,500 new homes is more than the maximum 20% projection in the Comprehensive Plan of 4,160 new homes (208 homes /year x 20 years), extrapolating that growth in to the future indicates significant negative impacts could be observed if the rural areas grow at a rate projected in the Comprehensive Plan or faster.

Low well yield areas comprise 25.48% of the Piedmont geological area within the County. Low yield wells often require wells to be drilled deeper or necessitate the use of storage tanks to ensure adequate flow of water during normal household use. Low yield wells are also more susceptible to changes in precipitation levels and rates of surface water run-off due to the limited nature of rock fractures allowing groundwater to infiltrate into the well. It can be surmised that increased impervious cover due to new development could potentially have long term negative implications for low yield wells where more rainwater runs off impervious areas rather than soaks into the ground. Cumulative situations of observed low well yields will place more pressure on the County to provide public water to those areas.

Extension of public water lines to remote areas would have both high costs for construction and maintenance, and is not planned for in the Comprehensive Plan.

Fire and Rescue:

Like many rapidly growing suburban communities, Stafford County includes many areas that vary greatly in geography as well as in the level of available supporting infrastructure. Specifically, rural areas (areas outside of the designated Urban Services Area) can present a significantly complex, challenging and costly demand to fire and rescue operations. With increased travel distances and limited routes to emergency scenes, response times are typically higher not only for the first apparatus to arrive but also for critical supporting apparatus to arrive. This delay in hazard mitigation often results in larger sized incidents that require more personnel, apparatus and a longer duration to resolve the situation. Furthermore, the proximity and density of structures and overall population tend to be lower in these areas. Although this does help to reduce the scale of losses, it can also dramatically decrease the return on investment for placing emergency units throughout these areas to achieve an equivalent level of service or other response parameter throughout the County. Finally, the lack of a readily available water supply can further hinder firefighting operations by increasing not only the time needed to locate and transport water with vehicles (known as tankers) but also requires apparatus above and beyond the standard assignment sent to areas served by public water and fire hydrants. For example, a typical house fire assignment in the rural areas of the County that do not have fire hydrants includes adding at least three tankers and one engine specifically to handle the lack of a readily available water supply.

Law Enforcement:

The primary driver of workload, and therefore required expenditures, for patrol activities is calls for service. To estimate the predicted increase in workload of specific types of developments (designed to increase the density of people), the Sheriff's Office has developed a process which compares the workload (calls for service) in known areas to the proposed development. This is then converted to the needed increase in personnel and equipment (and the associated cost). Remote areas, which have not developed, do not contribute significantly to the numbers of calls for service or for increases in criminal activities. Increases in calls for service occur, in general, in areas of increased density of people (including residential and commercial growth). In Stafford County, calls for service continue to grow, necessitating the need for additional personnel and associated equipment, and therefore increasing the overall cost to operate.

Transportation:

Most rural roads in the County do not meet modern construction standards. As such, significant capacity and safety issues arise as traffic volumes increase. Each single family dwelling is estimated to generate 10 vehicle trips per day. Based on current Capital Improvement Program (CIP) funding capacity, the County will not be in a position to significantly contribute funding towards any transportation improvements until after the year 2023.

Schools:

Buses in urban locations can be used more efficiently as the stops are closer together and the buses can be loaded more to capacity. In an effort to maintain bus routes to 60 minutes or less those in rural locations run out of time before they run out of capacity which results in a less efficient use of buses. Due to capacity constraints for providing water and sewage sanitation, all but one County school is located in the Urban Services Area. This exacerbates the problem of school bus trip times. Hartwood Elementary School is the only school in the County that relies on a well and separate sewage discharge system. These systems have had the need to be improved over the years to handle capacity of added school children.

Goal 2. Ensure that growth and development is managed in a fiscally responsible manner.

Policy 2.6.2. Priority should be given to meeting capital improvement, road and other infrastructure needs within the Targeted Growth Area, and to a lesser extent the remainder of the USA.

It is widely understood and recognized principle that the cost to provide public services is higher for more remote locations. Distance from the source of services is a significant factor. Transportation related services such as providing school bus service to children, fire and rescue response, and police response increase with the distance of the residence from the nearest bus terminal, school, fire station, or police station. Additionally, there are increased costs associated with fuel usage; mileage on vehicles requiring more frequent and costly repair, maintenance, and replacement; and compensation for manpower necessary to offer the services. In the case of fire suppression efforts, these increased costs also entail using tanker trucks and larger fire apparatus, and additional manpower to haul water to the scene of a fire as public water is not available in the rural areas. Some of these costs can be quantified as follows:

Fire and Rescue:

According to the most current County CIP information, apparatus to fight fires for locations where public hydrants do not exist costs approximately \$742,000 along with the personnel costs that exceed \$2,190,000 to operate these units throughout the year. The financial numbers alone represent an annual cost of the County of at least \$2,387,866 each year over the 15-year life span of the apparatus. Common solutions that can help reduce this impact of rural incidents to the Fire and Rescue system include strategically placed water sources or the incorporation of residential fire sprinklers; however, due to state regulations, those solutions are usually only able to be requested, not required of future development.

Law Enforcement:

Data that would provide the cost per call to rural areas versus developed areas has not been fully analyzed and would require a significant effort to do so without the value of such analysis being realized. The majority of calls for service are in developed areas and developed areas continue to contribute the most to increases in the need for service.

The replacement cost for a typical fully-equipped police vehicle is \$52,000, which has a projected life span of __ years. The Sheriff's vehicles cumulatively travel approximately 4,000,000 miles per year.

Transportation:

Increased residential development in remote areas exacerbate safety risks on substandard roadways which are not built to handle fast-moving passenger vehicles competing for the same roadway space as farm machinery, farm vehicles, pedestrians, and school buses. These concerns about safety risks result in the County having to improve these rural roadways when they have not reached traffic volume thresholds to warrant construction of additional lanes. Recent examples of such costs incurred by the County and the residents of the County include road construction and safety improvement projects on Mountain View Road, Poplar Road, and Brooke Road. Had slower rates of rural development occurred, more in line with the Comprehensive Plan's recommendation, then those projects may not have risen to a priority for the County, and those transportation funds could have been used within the USA for improvements to widen more frequently traveled, higher volume roads such as Jefferson Davis Highway, Shelton Shop Road, and White Oak Road.

In recent years, the County has completed four road improvement projects to address safety and capacity concerns on rural roadways. The average cost per mile for those projects is over \$6.7 million per mile as seen in the chart below.

Project Name	Length of Project	Total Cost	Cost/Mile	Cost/Mile Adjusted for Inflation (30%)
Poplar Road Phase 2	0.464	\$ 2,625,943	\$ 5,659,360	\$ 7,357,167.89
Mountain View Phase 1	1.297	\$ 6,141,453	\$ 4,735,122	\$ 6,155,658.37
Mountain View Phase 2	0.497	\$ 2,988,670	\$ 6,013,421	\$ 7,817,446.68
Brooke Road	1.791	\$ 7,742,874	\$ 4,323,213	\$ 5,620,176.55
			<i>Avg Cost/Mile =</i>	<i>\$ 6,737,612.37</i>

Given that the Comprehensive Plan stipulates that road improvements should be prioritized to the USA, it may be more than a decade before the County will be making significant safety improvements to rural roads.

Schools:

The per-mile cost to operate a mainstream bus is \$3.28 and a special-needs bus is \$4.14. Buses are typically replaced between 200,000 - 250,000 miles. The state recommendation for school bus replacement is not based on mileage but rather on years. That recommendation is 15 years. The cost to replace a mainstream bus is \$103,472 while the cost to replace a special-needs bus is \$109,102.

Goal 4 of the 2016 Comprehensive Plan is to “ensure the health, safety and well-being of Stafford County residents.” Policy 4.1.1 states that the County should “establish mechanisms to encourage active agricultural uses, and to re-establish active agricultural uses outside of the Urban Service Area.”

Implementation of this policy is important to ensure that the County has a sustainable food supply and healthy community. Allowing extensive residential development in the rural areas of the County is contrary to this goal, as it prioritizes new home construction over agricultural goods production. There are many locally supported agricultural farmers markets within the County, who depend on goods produced within a local radius. The continuation of these businesses and the production of fresh produce and products should be encouraged, and increased residential development in the rural areas overshadows these agricultural uses.

The Comprehensive Plan acknowledges that agriculture’s economic role has been diminished in the County. However, it is still a defining characteristic of the area and should not be completely dismissed. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s 2007 Census, there were 233 operational farms, comprising 19,816 acres with an estimated market value of \$2,798,000. The most recent 2012 Census of Agriculture showed declines all of those indicators. In 2012, Stafford County had 215 farms in operation that occupied 15,260 acres of land. The average farm size was 71 acres and the market value of production was \$2,739,000. Staff notes that these declines are indicative of conversion and preparation for continued conversion of agricultural lands for residential development.

Goal 5. Promote affordable and quality housing.

Policy 5.1.2. Incorporate criteria in the County’s monetary proffer guidelines that offer credit for providing affordable housing.

Policy 5.2.1. Create land-use incentives for private development of affordable housing.

Policy 5.2.2. Identify publicly owned properties that could be redeveloped as public housing for public employees.

Policy 5.3.2. Affordable housing will be encouraged in, but not limited to, Targeted Growth Areas, as designated on the Land Use Plan Map.

Goal 6. Create an intermodal system of transportation which implements the Land Use Plan by providing a safe, efficient and affordable means for our people and products to move safely in and through Stafford County.

Policy 6.2.2. Encourage the future expansion and development of an efficient transit system inside the Urban Services Area and Targeted Growth Areas to serve higher density employment, retail and residential areas and sectors of the population with limited mobility. Where practical, transit systems should provide access from residential areas to commuter rail stations and park and ride lots.

Goal 7. Support the economic vitality of Stafford County through land use policies.

Policy 7.1.1. Minimum floor area ratios should be established and maximum floor area ratio requirements should be relaxed for commercial development within mixed use

redevelopment and Targeted Growth Areas. Encourage an appropriate mix of uses, with a minimum of 25% land and/or building area designated for commercial or business use, depending on the land use.

Goal 8. Support Stafford County as a community for superior education.

Policy 8.1.2. Future schools should be located within the Urban Services Area (USA). Exceptions may be made when the only way to meet Level of Service Standards or location criteria contained in the Public Facilities Plan is to locate the facility outside the USA or when land is dedicated to the County and the development of the site and any required infrastructure would not be cost prohibitive or detrimental to its growth management policies.

STATE CODE PROVISIONS:

The State Code gives localities specific authority to incentivize residential growth in designated areas. Many of the incentives involve increased density for by-right development. To some degree, there are economic incentives such as the ability to grant some limited fee waivers and to target construction of public infrastructure.

Sec. 15.2-958.4 allows upon adoption of a local ordinance, the ability to provide for a waiver of building permit and other local fees for non-profit agencies constructing or providing affordable housing.

Sec. 15.2-2223.1 allows the County to establish Urban Development Areas. The County has done so in establishment of its TGAs. These areas are designated for higher development densities. They can be designed as mixed-use neighborhoods with commercial development and a mix of housing types. Development of the TGAs can be phased. The Comprehensive Plan shall describe financial and other incentives for development in those areas. This implies that the County has the authority to selectively adjust development fees or streamline development approval processes to incentive development in the TGAs compared to other areas of the County. Additionally federal, state and local funding for infrastructure is to be focused on the TGAs. Enhanced infrastructure would help to make the TGAs desirable locations to build new housing.

Sec. 15.2-2283 establishes the purpose of zoning ordinances. That code provision specifically speaks about growth management in that it allows localities to facilitate the creation of convenient attractive and harmonious communities, protect against overcrowding of land, protect against undue density of population in relation to community facilities existing or available, and promote the creation and preservation of affordable housing to meet the current and future needs of the County. As a result, the County has the authority to establish development densities in its zoning categories and zone properties accordingly within the bounds of the law.

Sec. 15.2-2286 allows the County to adopt “incentive zoning”. “Incentive zoning” means the use of bonuses in the form of increased project density or other benefits to a developer in return for the developer providing certain features, design elements, uses services, or amenities desired by the County. Once the incentives are established in the zoning ordinance, the increase in density would be a

by-right option for the developer subject to provision of the additional requirements identified by the County. Incentive zoning could be applied to areas located within the USA and/or TGAs.

Sec. 15.2-2286.1 allows the County through its development regulations to grant density bonuses in certain zoning districts that allow for cluster development. Currently, the R-1, Suburban Residential Zoning District allows for a density bonus upon approval of a Conditional Use Permit (CUP). The CUP process is an additional cost of development and takes several months to obtain approval from the Board of Supervisors. Consideration could be made to amend the cluster development regulations to allow for a density bonus as a by-right activity in exchange for enhanced community amenities. The R-1 zoning district is required to be located within the USA. Allowing the density bonus could further facilitate development in the Suburban Areas of the USA. The Comprehensive Plan currently recommends development densities of up to three units per acre in the Suburban Areas. The current maximum density allowed in the R-1 zone is 1.5 units per acre. The current density bonus allows cluster development up to 2.25 units per acre.

Sec. 15.2-2316.2 allows the County through its Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) program to grant density bonuses for owners sending development rights from a designated sending area(s) to the designated receiving area(s). The County currently has a TDR program in effect. It is limited to one sending area and one receiving area. Its applicability could be expanded to further encourage voluntary directed growth from the rural areas of the County to the TGAs. The current program allows for a direct transfer of development rights at a one to one ratio. Consideration could be made to allow for density bonuses to further incentivize the use of TDR.

Peer Locality Urban Growth Management Strategies

The table below provides a comparison of growth management strategies for Stafford County and its peer localities. The table was based on analysis of Comprehensive Plan policies and programs that are in place in each jurisdiction. Six different strategies were identified for comparison purposes. Stafford County currently utilizes, in some form, four of the six strategies. Only Stafford and Hanover Counties have a desired ratio of urban versus rural development as a growth management metric. Four of the seven localities use density bonuses as an incentive for desired development practices.

	Peer Locality Growth Management Strategies						
Strategy	Stafford	Albemarle	Fauquier	Hanover	Loudoun	Prince William	Spotsy
Designated UDA's	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	
Special Area Master Plans	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	
Promotes Infill & Redevelopment	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
Promotes higher density areas as more desirable places to live		✓			✓		
Allows density bonuses when conditions met (affordable housing, design elements)		✓	✓		✓	✓	
Urban / Rural Growth Policy	80/20			70/30			

Peer Locality Rural Growth Management Strategies

The table below compares strategies used by Stafford and its peer localities for rural land preservation.

	Peer Locality Growth Management Strategies						
Strategy	Stafford	Albemarle	Fauquier	Hanover	Loudoun	Prince William	Spotsy
PDR Program	✓	✓	✓				✓
Voluntary Easement Program		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
TDR Program	✓						
Rural Econ Dev't Program			✓	✓			
Ag/Forest Districts		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Land Use Taxation	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Combine with Cultural, Scenic and Envir. Component		✓	✓			✓	
Public Education/Communication		✓	✓				
Partner with Land Trusts		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Set Acreage Target for Open Space			✓		✓	✓	
Establish Conservation Design Policies		✓			✓		

All of these counties have zoning regulations that affect the development potential in the designated rural areas. All of these localities have either larger minimum lot size requirements or more restrictive requirements for subdividing property in their respective agricultural areas than Stafford County.

A summary of the zoning requirements are listed in the table below:

Agricultural Density in Comparative Localities				
<i>Locality</i>	<i>County Code Section</i>	<i>Agricultural Zoning Districts</i>	<i>Minimum Lot Area – Conventional Subdivision</i>	<i>Minimum Lot Area – Cluster Subdivision</i>
Stafford	Sec. 28-35	A-1 Agricultural A-2 Rural Residential	A-1: One home per 3 acres A-2: One home per 1 acre	A-1: One home per 1.5 acres. A-2: One home per 0.7 acres.
Albemarle	Sec. 18-10.4 Sec. 10.3.1 Sec. 10.3.3	RA Rural Area	RA: One home per 2 acres for conventional & cluster development. *Albemarle County's Rural Area contains a minimum lot size as well as a limit to the total number of lots of less than 21 acres based on parcels of record as of 12/10/80. A developer cannot obtain any more density by clustering than they can through conventional means. The total number of lots permitted for a parcel of 21 acres or less is 5 lots. If a parcel is 21 or more acres, any number of lots can be developed provided the density does not exceed one home per 21 acres. (Ex: 210 Parcel/21 acres = 10 lots of 21 acres).	
Fauquier	*Zoning Ord. 2-308 Zoning Ord. 3-4 Zoning Ord. 3-2	RC Rural Conservation RA Rural Agricultural RR-2 Rural Residential	*RC: Min: One home per 10 acres, Max: 11 homes per 205 acres. *RA: Min: One home per 10 acres, Max: 11 homes per 205 acres. RR-2: One home per 2 acres. *Density based on Sliding Scale.	RC: One home per 2 acres; parcel of 30+ acres w/ 85% open space. RA: One home per 2 acres; parcel of 30+ acres w/ 85% open space. RR-2: One home per 2 acres w/ 50% open space.
Hanover	Sec. 26-24, 30 Sec. 26-39 Sec. 26-48	A-1 Agricultural AR-6 Agricultural Residential RC Rural Conservation	A-1: One home per 10 acres *AR-6: One home per 2 acres, two lot max. (4-13.99a), One home per 2 acres, three lot max (14-24.99a), One home per 5 acres, 1 lot per 6.25a max (25+a) RC: One home per 6.25 acres *Contingent upon size of parcel (in acres [a]) being subdivided.	*A-1: One home per 2 or less acres. AR-6: Clustering not permitted. RC: Clustering not permitted *Only district where clustering is permitted.
Loudon	Sec. 2-100 Sec. 2-200 Sec. 2-300 Sec. 2-400	AR-1 Agricultural Rural-1 AR-2 Agricultural Rural-2 A-10 Agriculture A-3 Agricultural Residential	AR-1: One home per 20 acres (Base Division); 80,000 sq. ft. (Principal/Subordinate) AR-2: One home per 40 acres (Base Division); 80,000 sq. ft. (Principal/Subordinate). A-10: One home per 10 acres A-3: One home per 3 acres	AR-1: One home per 4 or less acres AR-2: One home per 4 or less acres A-10: One home per 3 acres A-3: Clustering not permitted.

Prince William	Sec. 32-301.05 Sec. 32-300.40-42 Sec. 32-302.01-06 Sec. 32-302.11-16 Sec. 32-302.21-26 Sec. 32-300.50-53	A-1 Agricultural SR1 Semi-Rural SR 3 Semi-Rural SR 5 Semi-Rural	A-1: One home per 10 acres SR1: One home per 1 acre SR3: One home per 3 acres SR5: One home per 5 acres	A-1: One home per 3 acres minimum, one home per 5 acres maximum. SR1, SR3, & SR 5: 1 home per 20,000 sq. ft. w/public water & sewer; 1 home per 1 acre w/o public water & sewer.
Spotsylvania	Sec. 23-6.3.4 Sec. 23-6.4.4 Sec. 23-6.5.4	A-2 Agricultural 2 A-3 Agricultural 3 RA Resort Agricultural	A-2: One home per 5 acres A-3: One home per 10 acres RA: One home per 2 acres	A-2: One home per 2 acres A-3: One home per 3 acres RA: Zone does not permit cluster subdivisions as a use.

POTENTIAL STRATEGIES TO INCENTIVIZE RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE TARGETED GROWTH AREAS (TGAs):

Developers and builders of residential housing attempt to meet market demands while making a profit. The demand for housing within the County remains strong. The market is driven by demands for specific types of housing such as apartments; condominiums; townhomes; single-family detached homes for young single adults, young families, established families, active adults in their retirement years; and housing for the elderly and disabled.

Growth management strategies to incentivize development within the USA and TGAs will mainly relate to the efficiencies of development densities and fees charged for services. Timing and certainty of development approvals can also help to facilitate the preferred types of development. Where the efficiencies of development densities off-set the high costs of land and construction costs, developers and home builders can realize the profit margins necessary to facilitate residential development desired by the County. The County can directly influence the aspects of density through its zoning regulations and to some degree influence development costs through the timeliness of approvals and associated land development regulations and policies. Consistency and timeliness of approvals also help to minimize risk for developers and enhance their willingness to invest in the real estate market in the County.

The Comprehensive Plan projects that 50% of the future growth in the County by 2036 should take place in the TGAs. Specifically, the TGAs should accommodate 9,820 dwelling units or 493 dwellings per year over the 20-year planning horizon. Based on pending applications for zoning reclassifications and new subdivisions, there are 2,334 dwelling units proposed to be located in the TGAs. If all of those pending dwelling units were to be approved, 7,486 additional dwelling units would be necessary to meet the desired planning goal for the TGAs for the remaining 17 years of the Comprehensive Plan. That is equivalent to building 440 dwelling units per year for each of those 17 years. It should be noted that it takes approximately two to three years after approval of a zoning reclassification for a development projects to start producing dwelling units. Large development projects may take multiple years to be completed once construction has commenced.

The Comprehensive Plan has a suitability matrix identifying the readiness of the TGAs for development. This can be used as a starting point for determining a preferred growth management strategy to incentivize development in the TGAs.

The below listing of strategies is not exhaustive and is in no particular order hierarchy. The listed strategies are also not mutually exclusive, and one or more may be utilized together or separately. This list is intended to help focus the Board's discussion on how it would like to proceed with the Healthy Growth initiative.

Strategy # 1:

Consider adopting a policy for prioritizing and streamlining zoning reclassifications in the TGAs – The existence of such a policy provides a preference for projects within the TGAs compared to the Suburban Areas of the USA. The policy could indicate the willingness to consider and process zoning reclassifications in an accelerated manner for property located within the TGAs that also meet the land use recommendations in the Comprehensive Plan. Projects could be evaluated based on the timeliness of the reclassification application relative to the development readiness of the selected TGA. The policy acting as formal acknowledgement of this preference and willingness may incentivize investors and developers to reclassify property within the TGAs for desired development.

Strategy #2:

Consider density increases for development in the TGAs – Increased densities can help to off-set high land acquisition and development costs. Current density limitations, especially for multi-family development, require purchases of large land tracts. Zoning regulations that lead to increased density and more compact development allow for less land to be purchased and lower cost to develop, and also produces more walkable neighborhoods and communities. Increasing density through incentive zoning could be an avenue to explore. However, unlike proffers with zoning reclassifications, incentives for additional density must be known up-front and must be provided on the site of the development project. Incentive features often entail preservation of land for parks and open space or providing desired recreational amenities.

The residential density adopted for the UD, Urban Development Zoning District was set at the minimum level for density that can support walkable neighborhoods and investment in public transit. The Board of Supervisors has engaged in extensive discussion about the prospect of creating a "Downtown Stafford," which would require increased density. During the discussions, the Board seemed amenable to increasing density of the UD zoning district to achieve this purpose. Specifically, densities for mixed-use and multi-family dwellings were discussed as needing at least 40 dwelling units per acre to support structured parking. The use of elevators and structured parking were considered desired features of both commercial and residential uses within that area.

Strategy #3:

County initiated zoning reclassifications – The Board of Supervisors through its zoning powers can proactively reclassify property for desired development. Establishing desired zoning up-front may facilitate desired development. It minimizes time, expense and risk to developers. Most zoning reclassifications are initiated by individual property owners. Proffers may be voluntarily offered by the property owners to off-set impacts of the proposed development in order to gain zoning approval. Proffers can relate to a variety of things such as: uses allowed on a property; building height, size and architecture; configuration of development; and impacts to public facilities including monetary payments to assist the County with construction of streets, schools, fire stations, and parks.

A major consideration related to County initiated zoning reclassification is that the County cannot accept or require proffers from the property owners. This means that detailed advanced planning should be in place to ensure that community needs will be met. This may include development of master plans for properties, creation of broad architectural standards for the zoning district being imposed, and infrastructure investment to serve the envisioned development.

Strategy #4:

Consider expanding the TDR program and include additional incentives for its use – As mentioned above, the TDR program to date has had limited success but it has great potential to redirect undesirable growth from the rural areas to the TGAs. Additional incentives can also be provided with the TDR program. Consideration can be made to either expand or add new sending and receiving areas. The recent flurry of TDR activity ensued after the TDR Receiving Area was expanded. Expanding the Receiving Areas to include other TGAs could increase the available land for desired development. Adding additional Sending Areas also can be used as a tool to reinforce the desire to direct housing growth from the rural areas to the TGAs.

The current development right ratio is one-to-one. One development right to be sent from a sending area is equivalent to one residential development right or 3,000 square feet of commercial floor area in a receiving area. Consideration can be made to enhance this ratio where properties in far-out areas of the County could attain a higher ratio for each development right severed from the property. The logic being, properties located further from the USA and county services cost the taxpayers more money than properties located closer to the USA and county services. Therefore, it would be better to incentivize owners of those further-out properties to conserve their land rather than developing it for housing. State legislation which goes into effect July 1, 2019, could also incentivize the expansion of the TDR program by allowing the county to designate development rights to go from specific a sending area to a specific receiving area. This further enhances the growth management abilities of the TDR program. Development rights could more readily be directed to TGAs that have adequate public facility capacities to accommodate them.

One area of caution for pursuing expansion of the TDR program is its land conservation aspect. When development rights are severed from a property a deed of covenants restricting the future use of the property, in perpetuity, for land conservation purposes is recorded. The minimal residual uses of the

property are established by State and County codes. TDR sending areas should be located in areas where long-term future development is not desired or contemplated. TDR sending areas should not be located adjacent to the USA or any area where the USA boundary may be expanded beyond the current 20-year planning horizon.

Strategy #5:

Provide greater incentives for mixed-use development – From a fiscal perspective, development projects that include both commercial and residential components typically generate more tax revenue than strictly residential projects. The TGAs encourage mixed-use development at a walkable scale. Consideration can be made to allow increased development densities for mixed-use buildings. Another possible incentive could be to accept less monetary proffers as part of a zoning reclassification application based on the projected fiscal benefit of the mixed-use project. This would require a detailed revenue, cost, and expenditure analysis to be developed and agreed to by the Board and the developer.

Strategy #6:

Prepare small area plans to provide clear direction – The Comprehensive Plan identifies five TGAs (Courthouse, Centreport, Southern Gateway, Leeland and Brooke). The TGAs are intended to be walkable mixed-use centers of activity. Currently, the core area of the Courthouse TGA has a developed small area plan that specifies details of street layouts and uses for property. The reminder of the Courthouse TGA and the other TGAs have no detailed plans but include broad land use suggestions. Preparing detailed small area plans for the TGAs may help to improve opportunities for investments in the TGAs by reducing uncertainty about what land use types will be acceptable to the County and what infrastructure improvements may be required. Preparing these plans will require a consultant and significant community input as well as significant commitment by the County.

Strategy #7:

Provide incentives to off-set the impact of development costs in the TGAs – Another potential means to incentivize development in the TGAs is to reduce or spread out development costs. Reduced development costs or costs incurred over a long time period could off-set high land costs and improve the profitability of a development project making it more desirable for investment. Incentives could be geared towards the county constructing or reimbursing developers for constructing needed public infrastructure. This may be accomplished through such mechanisms as establishment of Community Development Authorities (CDA), Service Districts, and Tax Increment Financing (TIF). CDAs and service districts would help the county with financing public infrastructure such as roads, utilities, parks and schools. This would be an avoidance of up-front costs for a developer. The bonds for constructing the public improvements would be paid back over time by the property owners located in a specified service area. Use of TIF would assist developers in attracting development financing. The money generated by not charging the incremental increase in tax revenue helps a developer to assure lenders that there is some guarantee of revenue to pay-off the debt for constructing infrastructure. TIF is typically used for single development projects rather than multiple projects over a larger geographic area, which may be

more appropriately used for CDAs and service districts. All of these options are heavily drive by State law and staff may require assistance from outside professionals to establish.

POTENTIAL RURAL GROWTH MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES:

The past approaches to address development pressures in the rural areas of the County have been largely ineffective. The Board of Supervisors at its 2018 Planning Retreat requested staff to proceed in a new direction and develop more effective and efficient growth management strategies for the rural areas of the County. In developing a new framework, staff reviewed rural land strategies from peer localities as described above. Staff also prepared some quantitative analysis. A build-out analysis was developed using GIS data and the growth projections of the 2016 Comprehensive Plan to determine what the future minimum lot size requirement in the rural areas would need to be in order to maintain the desired 20% rural residential development ratio. Staff also evaluated acreage requirements to sustain agricultural activities.

A-1 ZONING BUILD-OUT ANALYSIS:

Staff modeled a scenario where all A-1 zoned property located outside of the USA and large enough to be subdivided under the current 3-acre minimum lot size was developed to its maximum potential. At full build-out, there would be approximately 9,598 additional homes. This would be an unlikely worst case scenario where there would be very few farms left in the County and much of the rural open spaces would be located on residential lots.

Staff also modeled two scenarios where the 80/20 growth policy was maintained throughout the duration of the Comprehensive Plan and also out to the year 2076. The results determined how large the resultant lot sizes in the rural areas would need to be to maintain the 80/20 growth policy.

- *Scenario 1* – Buildout during Comprehensive Plan planning horizon – 19 years, out to year 2036
- *Scenario 2* – Full Buildout of all available land in the County – 59 years, out to year 2076

Results:

The analysis determined in each scenario provides additional residential dwelling units outside the USA and a range of minimum A-1 lot sizes required to maintain the 80/20 growth policy.

- *Scenario 1* – 2,020 additional dwelling units; minimum lot sizes of 15 to 17 acres
- *Scenario 2* – 6,386 additional dwelling units; minimum lot sizes of 4 to 5 acres

The difference in these minimum lot sizes can be attributed to the amount of growth anticipated over the different time horizons, and that growth allocated to the same area of land.

ACREAGE REQUIREMENTS FOR SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE:

Stafford County's current Land Use tax program has minimum acreage requirements in order to be eligible for use value assessments and reduced taxable values. Agricultural and horticultural activities must be located on a minimum of 5 acres of land. Forestry requires a minimum of 20 acres. Observing

the minimum lot size criteria in the zoning categories of the peer localities, the most common lot size for agricultural zones is 10 acres. Staff would suggest that 10 acres be the baseline for sustaining agricultural activities. Note, however, that 10-acre lot sizes would not result in sustainable farming in its traditional sense. Ten-acre lots may be able to support truck farm activities that support farmers markets and way-side stands as well as niche agricultural production that can be conducted in confined spaces such as berry farms.

There are a number of potential strategies that can be used as a means to regulate housing development and incentivize land preservation and continuation of agriculture in the rural areas. The below listing of strategies is not exhaustive and is in no particular order hierarchy. The listed strategies are also not mutually exclusive, and one or more may be utilized together or separately. This list is intended to help focus the Board's discussion on how it would like to proceed with the Healthy Growth initiative.

STRATEGY #1:

Increase minimum lot sizes – Acknowledging the outcome of the build-out analysis, the County could change the minimum lot size requirement for the A-1, Agricultural Zoning District from 3 acres to 15 acres as indicated in Scenario 1. This would reduce the number of eligible residential lots that could be obtained in the A-1 district by 80%. It may require creating a new zoning district and applying those new standards to all A-1 zoned parcels located outside of the USA that are 15 acres or larger in size. If this were to be done for the cluster approved areas outside of the USA, then additional regulations for those types of cluster developments would need to be established. Another option would be to amend the existing A-1 Zoning District requirements to establish a minimum lot size of 15 acres; this would create many non-conforming lots, however.

Increasing the minimum lot size to 4 or 5 acres as indicated in Scenario 2 would have less impact on A-1 Zoning District property owners who intend to subdivide their properties. However, this would do little to preserve agriculture. Increasing the minimum lot size to 4 acres would reduce the potential number of future lots by 30%. Similarly increasing the minimum lot size to 5 acres would reduce the potential number of future lots by 60%. Four or five acre lots sizes will do little to preserve large tracts of land needed to retain a sense of rural character and would not likely affect the rate of development in the rural areas. In fact, it may accelerate the build-out of the rural areas by consuming more land for residential lots than the current 3-acre minimum lot size.

STRATEGY #2:

Create a sliding scale requirement – Such a requirement reduces the lot yield in proportion with the size of the parent parcel. Larger tracts of land would have fewer lots per acre. Albemarle, Fauquier, and Hanover Counties have similar provisions. This would allow for smaller lot sizes and a limited number of lots. The remainder parcel would be of a substantially larger size that could support agricultural activities. The remainder parcel could not be further subdivided. This strategy would require amending the A-1 zoning district standards. If the minimum lot size was set at 1.5 acres, it could eliminate concerns over creating non-conforming lots.

While effective, this strategy may be complicated or hard for citizens to understand. An example of how this might work can be explained by using the Albemarle regulations. The Albemarle regulations allow up to five residential lots to be divided on 21 acres. After that is accomplished, there could be one lot for each additional 21 acres. Assuming the current minimum lot size of 3 acres for a conventional (non-cluster) development is used, a 100-acre tract of land could yield a total of 8 lots. There would be seven 3-acre lots and one 79 acre lot. A tract of land that was 200 acres in size could yield 12 lots.

STRATEGY #3:

Establish density requirements for rural subdivisions – The A-1 and A-2, Rural Residential Zoning Districts currently specify minimum lot sizes. There are no density requirements that specify the number of acres per dwelling units. The residential zoning districts in the County establish minimum lot sizes as well as density requirements. The density requirements subtract out wetlands, floodplains, and slopes exceeding 35% from the acreage of the tract in order to determine how many residential lots can be achieved. Properties with substantial environmental constraints yield fewer lots. This type of density calculation requires the land owner to hire consultants to prepare environmental studies that are currently not required for A-1 and A-2 zoned subdivisions. An additional consideration is that the State Code limits the ability of localities to subtract out environmentally sensitive areas when determining permitted densities for cluster developments. This would result in no reduction of lot yield for cluster developments while conventional subdivisions could see fewer lots created from the same piece of property.

STRATEGY #4:

Increase building setbacks and buffers from streets – The current building setbacks are generally 50 and 40 feet for A-1 and A-2 zoned properties, respectively. Buildings located this close to the public streets can give the appearance of a suburban neighborhood rather a rural area where homes are more widely dispersed. Requiring deeper setbacks and/or buffers from streets may assist with the appearance of openness and retaining rural character. However, this will do very little with regards to the pace of converting farmland for residential development.

STRATEGY #5:

Implement a county-wide TDR program – This is the same as Strategy # 4 for the TGAs. The current TDR program is limited in geographic scope. However, if used correctly, it shows significant promise towards meeting the growth management goals of the Comprehensive Plan. TDR is a growth management tool that allows the County to directly influence where development can occur. It provides rural land owners an additional option to receive cash compensation for their land instead of selling it to another farmer or to a developer for conversion to a residential neighborhood.

As of July 1, 2019, state code will allow a locality to establish one or more sending and receiving areas and establish which receiving area gets development rights from what sending area. It is possible that multiple sending and receiving areas could have different incentives for using TDR. The zoning regulations in the receiving areas must be adjusted to accommodate all of the potential development

rights that could be sent from a corresponding sending area. Development density bonuses in the receiving areas and bonus development rights in sending areas could be used to make participation in TDR more desirable.

The outcome of TDR is that rural land is preserved from development and that development density is transferred to the TGAs where infrastructure can handle the intensity of development. Considerations should be made as to where the TDR sending areas would be located. Due to conservation easements being placed on sending properties, sending areas should not be located within the USA or areas adjacent to the USA that may be desirable for future growth beyond the current planning horizon of the Comprehensive Plan (2036). The changes to the development densities in the receiving areas should be gauged against the planned number of dwelling units for the TGAs to ensure that those areas are not over-built.

STRATEGY #6:

Expand funding for the PDR program – The County currently has an active PDR program. County policies require that local funds be matched dollar for dollar with federal and state funds. Often, the timing and availability of matching funds do not coincide with the availability of County funds; therefore, it may take a year or longer to achieve sufficient funds to begin the process to purchase the development rights from a specific property. County policy also dictates that funding for PDR comes from land use roll-back tax payments. The revenue generated from those payments vary from year to year based on which properties no longer are participating in this farming and forestry tax deferral program. Changes to county policies could provide for a more consistent local funding stream. Changing the policy to reduce the County's reliance on the required 50-percent state or federal matching funds may reduce the time necessary to purchase development rights, thereby facilitating the willingness of landowners to participate in the PDR program.

STRATEGY #7:

Develop incentives for agribusiness – Agribusiness and Agritourism are currently not defined terms in the zoning ordinance. The County is currently in the process of defining those terms and allowing those activities in the A-1 Zoning District through a code amendment. There are several zoning ordinance amendments that could be considered to incentivize the establishment of these types of businesses. Such incentives could include reducing or eliminating site plan compliance requirements, eliminate requirements for paved or gravel parking, and allowing related activities as by-right or accessory uses with performance standards rather than requiring additional zoning approvals. Designating this as a targeted industry for economic development purposes may also assist with the ability for businesses to attain grant funding.

CONCLUSION:

For decades, citizens of Stafford County have been concerned about growth and development of the County especially in the rural countryside where housing development is not expected. They have expressed a desire for new development to be well planned and located where public infrastructure is

adequate to handle the demands of the new residents and businesses. Focus has been on finding ways to incentivize development to locate in the USA and TGAs. Growth policies in the Comprehensive Plan have identified desired levels and form of growth in the Urban, Suburban, and Rural areas of the County. Analysis of current construction and approved development projects shows that future growth in the rural areas will exceed projections and have a negative effect on county residents. Acknowledging this in the Strategic Plan for 2040, the Board determined that more efforts need to be made to incentivize and channel development into the TGAs.

This paper has identified a number of strategies that the Board can adopt as its means to achieve Healthy Growth. It is highly likely that more than one strategy will need to be deployed to meet the desired outcomes envisioned in the Comprehensive Plan and the Strategic Plan. Staff believes that the chosen strategies should be used in tandem for both the Rural Areas and TGAs.

Information Sources:

- 1) Stafford County Virginia, Comprehensive Plan 2016-2036
- 2) Stafford County Subdivision List 2007 – 2018
- 3) Stafford County Active Subdivision List and Map
- 4) Groundwater Resources Evaluation Piedmont Aquifer of Stafford County, Virginia, ECS Mid-Atlantic LLC, February 2, 2018
- 5) Stafford County Fire Marshall's Office – E-mail dated 8/9/2018
- 6) Stafford County Sheriff's Office – E-mail dated 8/9/2018
- 7) Stafford County Public Works Department – E-mail dated 8/8/2018
- 8) Stafford County Public Schools – E-mail dated 8/6/2018
- 9) Stafford County Fire Marshall's Office – E-mail dated 8/9/2018
- 10) Stafford County Sheriff's Office – E-mail dated 8/9/2018
- 11) Stafford County Public Works Department – E-mail dated 8/8/2018
- 12) Growth Trends to 2045, Cooperative Forecasting in Metropolitan Washington, November 2016, Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments
- 13) Comprehensive Plan Build-out Analysis – Department of Planning and Zoning

DESIRED FUTURE STATE – 2040

HEALTHY GROWTH

Summary of Potential Growth Management Strategies (non-exhaustive)

Strategy	Potential Pros	Potential Cons
Policy to prioritize and streamline zoning reclassifications in TGAs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incentivizes zoning changes for desired development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None
Increase zoning density in the TGAs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Off-set high land costs for property • Compact development using less land increases the tax base • Promotes walkable neighborhoods 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to gauge against desired growth identified in the Comprehensive Plan • Potential for congestion and overcrowding if infrastructure is inadequate
County initiated zoning reclassifications in the TGAs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish zoning for desired development • Incentivizes development of property 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of ability to regulate and mitigate impacts of development through proffers • Could reduce funding for infrastructure improvements • May require substantial pre-planning and infrastructure investment
Expand the TDR Program and incentivize its use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Directs growth to desired locations • Can reinforce goals of the Comprehensive Plan • Voluntary program • Does not adversely affect property rights • No zoning approvals required for new development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Once started cannot be undone • No zoning approvals for new development; becomes by-right development • Infrastructure has to be sufficient to handle by-right development
Greater incentives for mixed-use development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fiscal benefits • Promotes walkable neighborhoods 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to gauge against desired growth identified in the Comprehensive Plan • Reduced proffer could reduce funding for infrastructure improvements
Prepare Small Area Plans for TGAs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Removes uncertainty for desired land uses for developer investment • Better definition of infrastructure needs • Community involvement in plan preparation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Takes time to develop through community involvement process • Requires use of consultants at substantial cost

Incentives to off-set impacts of development costs in TGAs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitates new development • Can expedite construction of needed infrastructure • New development pays for infrastructure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requires long term commitment from property owners • Selected property owners could pay higher fees
Increase minimum lot sizes for rural residential development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduces available land for conversion to residential lots • If lot sizes are large enough, can support small scale agriculture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creates non-conforming lots • Reduces the number of lots obtained from a property affecting land values
Sliding scale requirement for rural residential development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduces available land for conversion to residential lots • Allows for limited small lot subdivisions • Discourages development of large land tracts • Can keep current minimum lot size the same to prevent non-conformities • Would not be suitable for creating residential neighborhoods 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduces the number of lots obtained from a property affecting land values • Favors development of smaller land tracts • Can be complicated and hard for residents to understand
Density requirement for rural subdivisions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduces available land for conversion to residential lots • Could result in larger lot sizes • Incentivizes cluster development due to better lot yield 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uncertainty of lot yield without environmental studies • May force the creation of smaller open space parcels to avoid a loss of lot yield
Increase building setbacks and buffer requirements for rural development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May help to dispel the perception of loss of rural character and open spaces 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does not affect the conversion of rural land to housing • May create non-conformities adversely affecting existing home owners
Expand funding for the PDR Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase funding could further facilitate land conservation in the rural areas • Establishing a dedicated funding source could enhance participation in the program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional taxpayer needed to expand the program • Matching funds from federal and state sources often do not keep pace with the availability of local funds • May need additional staff or conservation partner to administer the program
Incentives for agribusiness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong agribusiness can result in slowing the pace of farm conversion to housing • Can lead to enhanced tax base • Can lead to enhanced cultural and recreational opportunities for citizens 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential conflicts between agribusiness and existing residential neighborhoods