

Stafford County  
Board of Supervisors

March 20, 2018

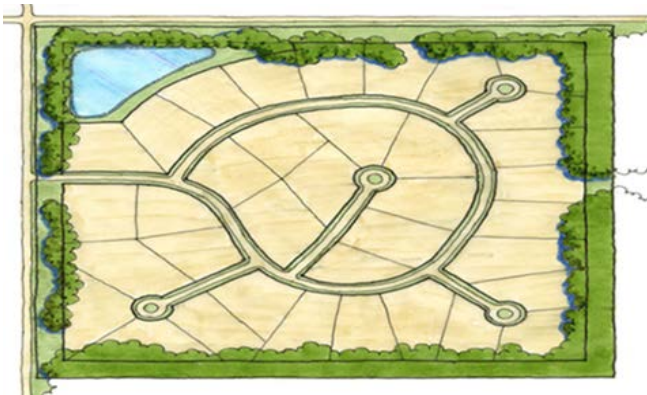
Cluster Development Regulations Repeal



## Subdivision Development

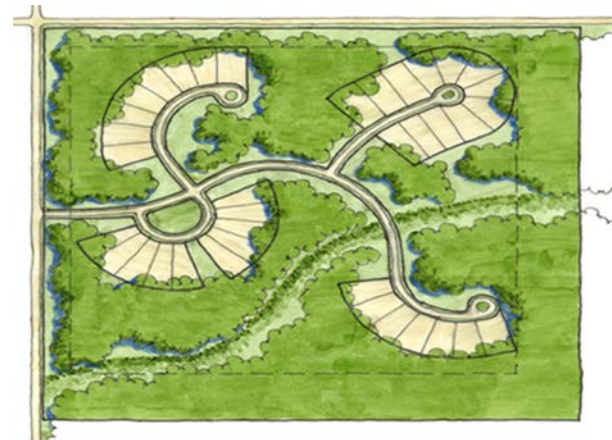
### Conventional Subdivision Design

All land included in  
individual lots



### Cluster Subdivision Design

Grouping of lots providing  
non-developed land



## Rural Open Space Land

Conservation of Land or  
Other Natural Resources





## Suburban Open Space Land

Conservation of land and provision of recreational space  
in Suburban Districts



# STAFFORD *Virginia*

## Historic Sites & Scenic Vistas in Rural & Suburban Open Space Land





## **Cluster Development Authority (Virginia Code §§ 15.2-2242 & 15.2-2286.1)**

- ❖ Cluster development regulations must be applicable to 40% of the unimproved land in agricultural and residential zoning districts.
- ❖ Land use requirements for cluster development shall not be more stringent than that of the zoning district.
- ❖ Limits and prohibits what localities may consider regarding open space land, as defined in the State Code.
- ❖ Density calculations for cluster development shall be based upon the same criteria for the property as would be applicable in the zoning district.
- ❖ Proposals for clustering must be approved by-right and implemented administratively.



## Background Cluster Development Regulations

- ❖ Originally adopted in 1987
- ❖ Amended in 1993, 1994, 2000, 2005, and 2007
- ❖ Repealed on March 20, 2012
- ❖ New regulations adopted on June 19, 2012
- ❖ Amended in 2013 and 2015
  - ❖ Addressed lot size, shape and use of open space land



## Comprehensive Plan

- ❖ Policy 1.2.12. Sets criteria for evaluating cluster development with increased densities (R-1 zoning).
- ❖ Objective 1.6. Preserve rural and agricultural areas of Stafford County and establish mechanisms for ensuring their continued protection from development.
- ❖ Policy 1.6.5. The County supports the preservation of rural character through the clustering of residential development. Cluster development would permit smaller lot sizes in exchange for preservation of open space, farmland, sensitive resources, and forested areas.





## Cluster Development Regulations

- ❖ Zoning District Regulations:
  - ❖ A-1, Agricultural District
    - ❖ Minimum lot area—1.5 acres
    - ❖ Open space requirement—50% of entire tract
  - ❖ A-2, Rural Residential District
    - ❖ Minimum lot area—0.7 acres
    - ❖ Open space requirement—30% of entire tract
  - ❖ R-1, Suburban Residential District
    - ❖ Allowable density—1.5 dwelling units/acre, up to 2.25 dwelling units/acre with Conditional Use Permit
    - ❖ Open space requirement—30% of entire tract
- ❖ Subdivision Regulations:
  - ❖ Open space maintenance, design, and use standards.
  - ❖ Review and approval process for cluster subdivisions.

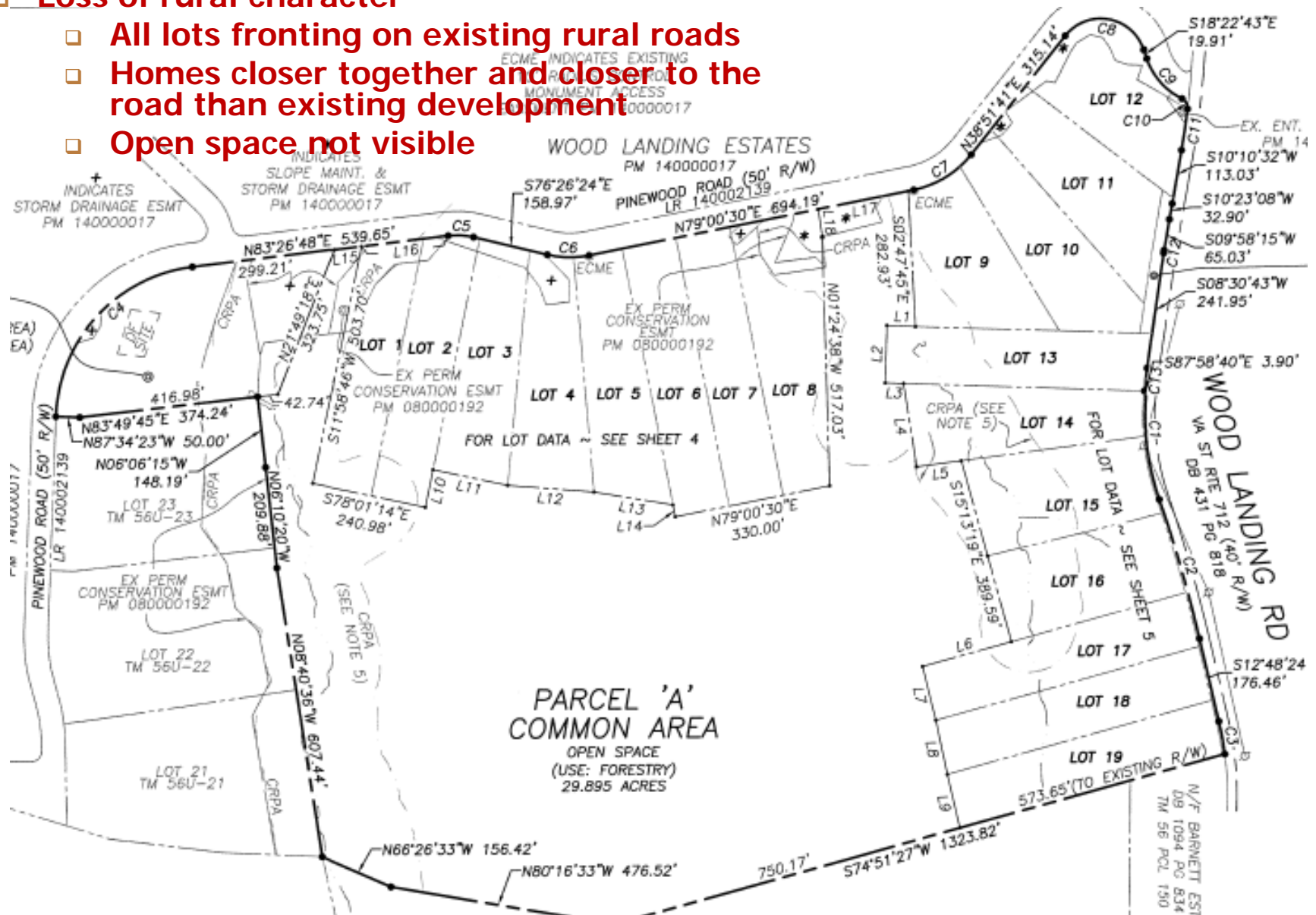


## Cluster Development Concerns

- ❖ Not promoting the intended goals and objectives for land preservation and good subdivision practices as envisioned in the Comprehensive Plan.
- ❖ Open space land configured such that it is not visible by the public creating a perception of overcrowding in rural areas and the loss of rural character.
- ❖ Increased number of lots and driveway accesses on existing rural roads creating a perception of overcrowding and loss of rural character.
- ❖ More lots are being created through cluster development than could be obtained by conventional subdivision development.
- ❖ Use of community drainfields.
- ❖ Open space not configured for intended farming or forestry uses.
- ❖ Open space land not contiguous or fragmented.
- ❖ Lack of community amenities - useable areas or recreation areas in neighborhoods.
- ❖ Open space substantially comprised of swm facilities and utility easements.



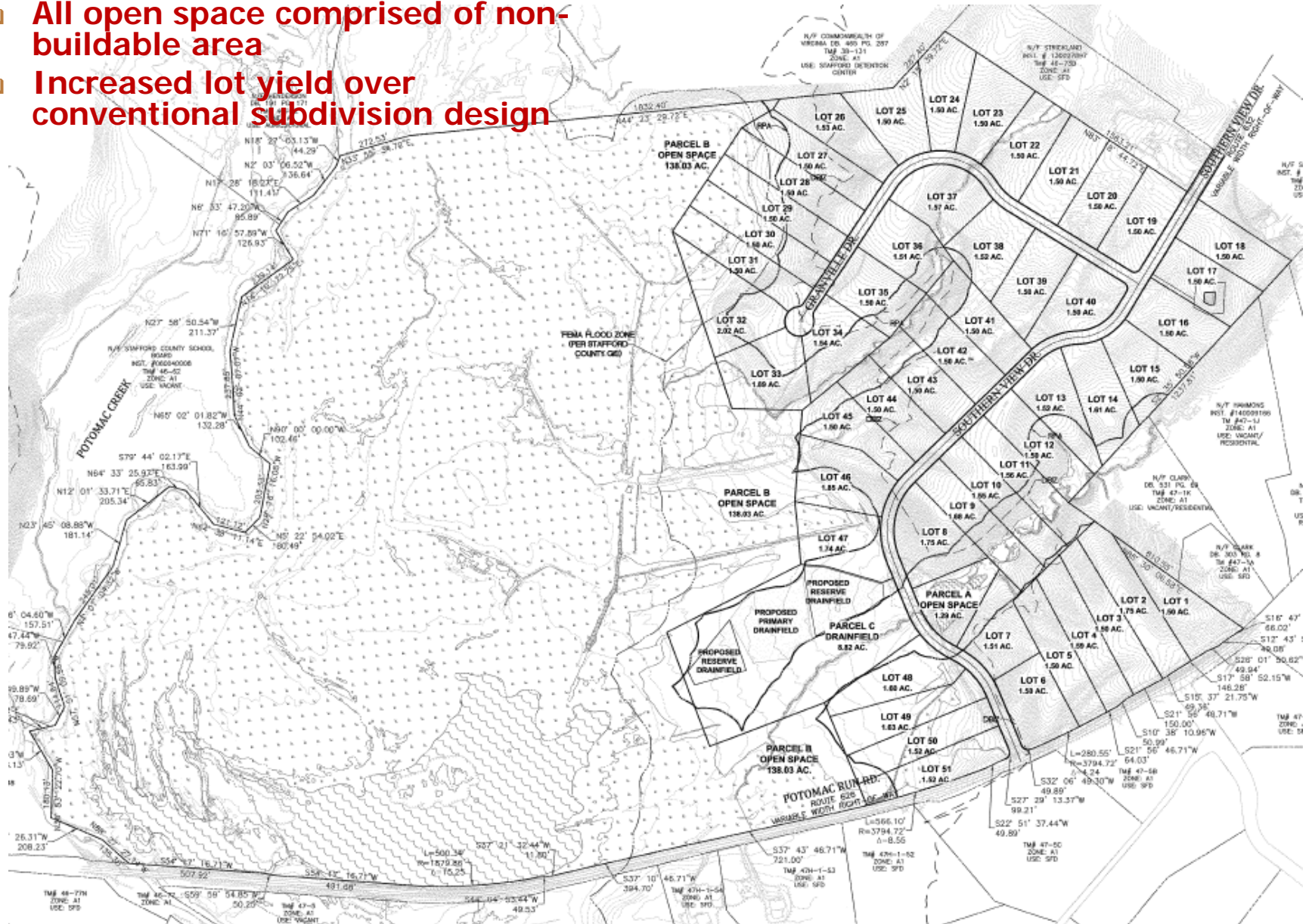
- **Loss of rural character**
  - All lots fronting on existing rural roads
  - Homes closer together and closer to the road than existing development
  - Open space not visible





- SHEET #4, 8, 10

- All open space comprised of non-buildable area
- Increased lot yield over conventional subdivision design



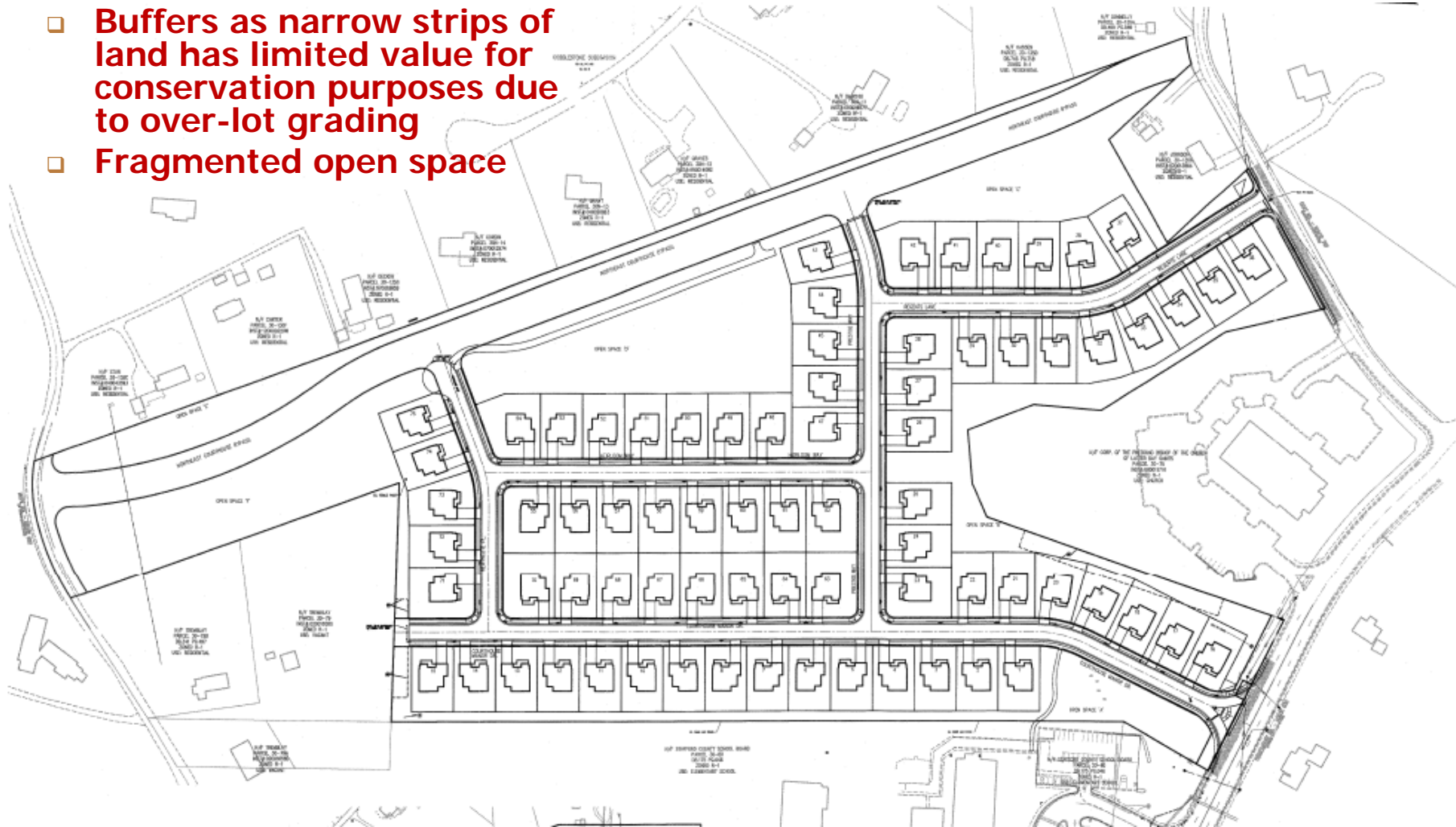
- increasing lot yield compared to conventional subdivision design
- Community drainfield serving more than one subdivision
- 
- The image is a detailed site plan for a residential subdivision. It shows a large area divided into numerous lots, some of which are shaded in grey, indicating they are part of a community drainfield. The lots are numbered, and the plan includes various labels for roads, easements, and other features. The plan is divided into two main sections, labeled 'PHASE 1' and 'PHASE 2'. The plan also includes a north arrow and a scale bar.



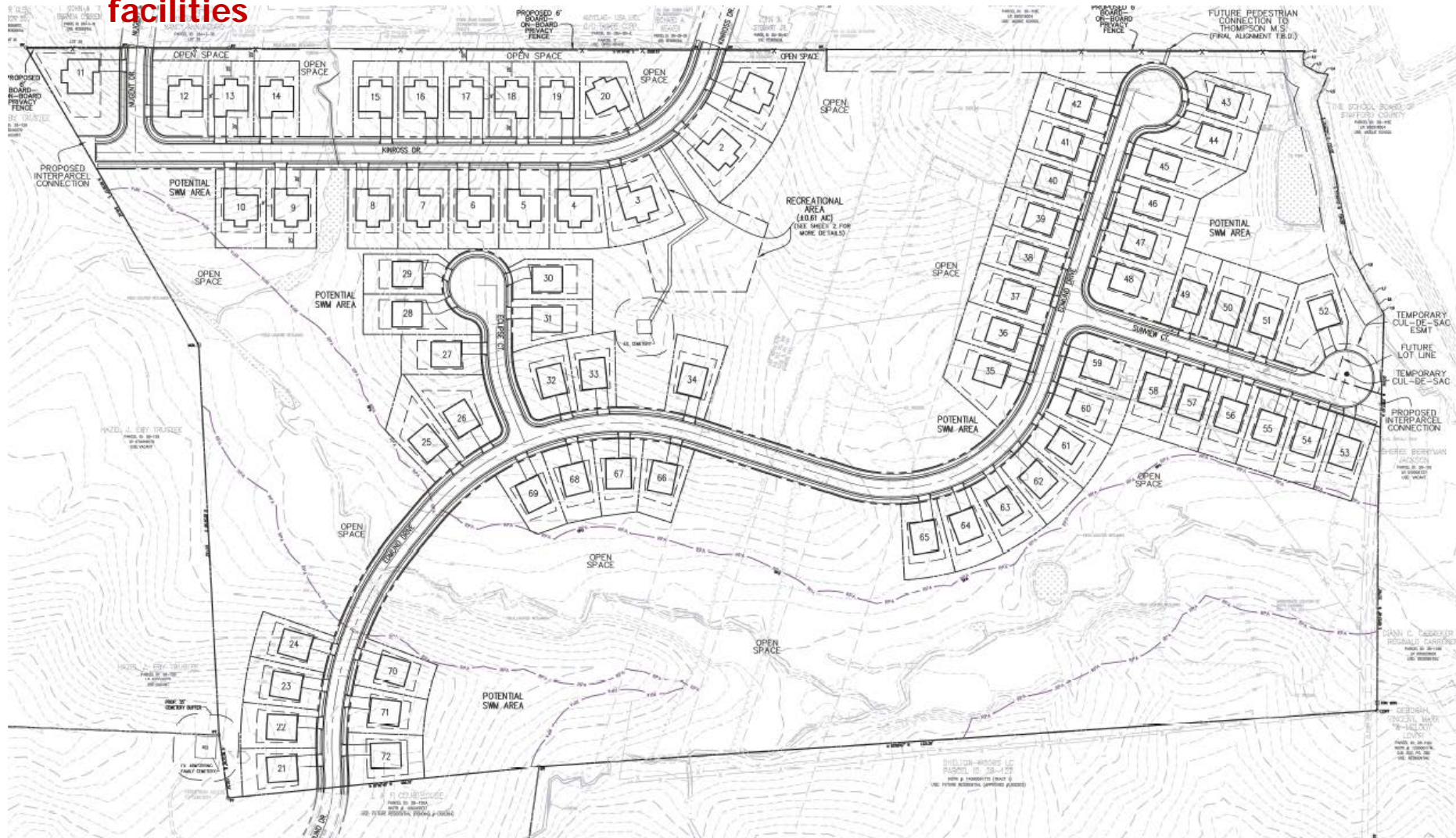
- ❑ Open space subdivided for resale
- ❑ Open space with limited access



- ❑ Buffers count towards open space
- ❑ Buffers as narrow strips of land has limited value for conservation purposes due to over-lot grading
- ❑ Fragmented open space



- **Limited usable open space given the size and location of CRPA, powerline easement, and swm facilities**





## Board of Supervisors Consideration

- ❖ Proposed Ordinance O18-13 would:
  - ❖ Repeal County Code, Article IX, Cluster Subdivisions
  - ❖ Amend to remove cluster development regulations:
    - ❖ County Code Sec. 22-58 "Content"
    - ❖ County Code Sec. 22-77 "Content"
    - ❖ County Code Sec. 28-35, Table 3.1 District Uses and Standards
- ❖ Options for Consideration
  - ❖ Full Repeal
  - ❖ Partial Repeal
  - ❖ Take no Action
  - ❖ Defer

