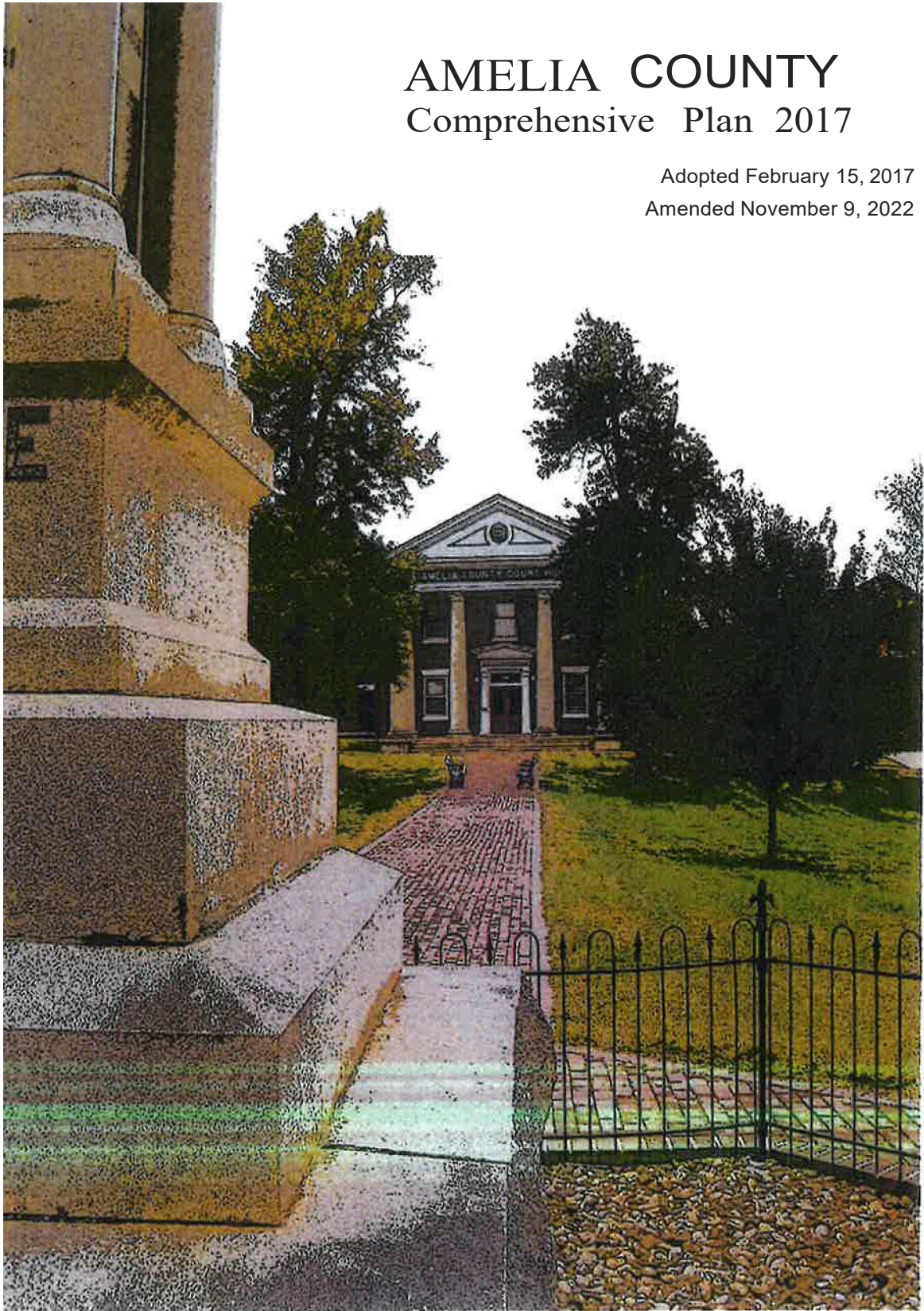


AMELIA COUNTY

Comprehensive Plan 2017

Adopted February 15, 2017

Amended November 9, 2022



The Amelia County Comprehensive Plan



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The Amelia County Comprehensive Plan



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I. Introduction

Chapter I: Introduction



What is a Comprehensive Plan?

The Comprehensive Plan is a long-range planning document that is designed to guide the future growth and development of a locality over the next twenty or more years. It is the local government's guide to future community, physical, and economic development. All Counties, Towns, and Cities are required by the Commonwealth of Virginia to adopt a Comprehensive Plan, and to review and update the plan every 5 years.

It is important to note that the Comprehensive Plan is not a legal regulatory document like the Zoning Ordinance or Subdivision Ordinance. Instead, it is a vision for what the citizens and leadership of Amelia want the County to be in the future. This vision is packaged together with goals and programs to help bring this community vision to reality. The plan will serve as a guide for County staff, appointed and elected leaders, and property owners as they make many small land use, fiscal, and other decisions over the coming years. The primary goal of this plan is to protect and improve the quality of life of its citizens by providing for the public health, safety, convenience and welfare of the County.

The Amelia County Comprehensive Plan recommends development areas and types of land use activities for the immediate and distant future. These recommendations are based on existing conditions, anticipated population and economic changes, and the desires of the citizens of Amelia as expressed through surveys, community meetings, and the representation of the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors. The policies expressed in this plan are intended to serve as the basis for the County's zoning and other development ordinances, which will be used to implement the plan. The plan should also be used by the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors in considering rezoning and development proposals, road and public facility locations, and capital improvement program and budget recommendations.

Planning is a multi-faceted process balancing the public interest with private property rights. This plan must be more than a listing of property owner's wishes. A good plan identifies potential future problems and conflicts, and identifies possible solutions. The major issue and opportunity facing Amelia County today is how it reacts to the expanding growth perimeter of the Richmond Metropolitan region and how that growth will be balanced with the County's rural quality of life.

Legal Basis and Use of the Plan

The Comprehensive Plan is developed in accordance with the Code of Virginia. The Virginia General Assembly has recognized the need for local planning by requiring that every local government in the Commonwealth adopt a comprehensive plan for the physical development of the territory under its jurisdiction. Section 15.2- 2223 of the Code states, in part, that:

"The comprehensive plan shall be made with the purpose of guiding and accomplishing a coordinated, adjusted and harmonious development of the territory which will, in accordance with present and probable future needs and resources, best promote the health, safety, morals, order, convenience, prosperity and general welfare of the inhabitants, including the elderly and persons with disabilities."

"The comprehensive plan shall be general in nature, in that it shall designate the general or approximate location, character, and extent of each feature, including any road improvement and any transportation improvement, shown on the plan and shall indicate where existing lands or facilities are proposed to be extended, widened, removed, relocated, vacated, narrowed, abandoned, or changed in use as the case may be."

In placing this requirement on local governments, the legislature demonstrated that, in its judgment, local development issues are the best handled at the local level of government and that the comprehensive plan provides one means of doing this.

While the plan should be flexible enough to accommodate the unforeseen and allow varied responses to changing conditions, it should contain standards and policies which provide sufficient guidance to elected and administrative officials. The comprehensive plan is becoming increasingly important as a legal basis for making land use decisions. Therefore, a well developed plan, with specific standards and policies, encourages consistency in town land use decisions.

Regional Context

Amelia County encompasses 361 square miles (or 231,000 acres) of beautiful and productive Central Virginia countryside. Located in Virginia's Piedmont region, the County is made up of farms, forests, homes, and businesses arranged over gently rolling topography. The County is bordered by Chesterfield County to the east, Powhatan County to the north, Prince Edward and Cumberland Counties to the west, and Nottoway and Dinwiddie Counties to the south.

The County is influenced by its outlying position in the larger Richmond Metropolitan area. With a metropolitan area population of approximately 1.2 million, the state capital region is home to an array of government, legal, financial, and professional services, as well as healthcare, retail, and other regional economies. Many residents of Amelia rely heavily on the larger region for both employment and shopping, providing for needs that are not met by local services and businesses. Among employed residents of Amelia, over 60% commute out of the County for work. The majority of these out-commuters travel east toward Chesterfield County, the City of Richmond, and other Richmond region locations.

Amelia has significant river frontage, with the Appomattox River forming the County's entire northern border, as well as rail and highway infrastructure. US Route 360 is the County's primary transportation arterial, running east and west through the middle of the County and linking Amelia to Richmond regional destinations to the east.

Amelia Courthouse is the principal settlement in the County, containing a small concentration of homes, and most of the County's government functions, schools, and shopping. The Courthouse village is located 37 miles southwest of the City of Richmond, and 25 miles east of Farmville along US Route 360.

Past Plans and Milestones

This 2016 Amelia County Comprehensive Plan is a complete reimagining of the County's future growth, development, and transportation potential. However, this plan could not exist without a strong grounding in the earlier efforts of County staff, citizens, and elected leaders, and in the plans, programs, and goals that they produced, including:

- [1995 Comprehensive Plan](#)
- [2001 Comprehensive Plan Update](#)
- [2005 Comprehensive Plan Update - Land Use Policies](#)
- [2011 Urban Development Area Plan](#)
- [Zoning Ordinance](#)
- [Subdivision Ordinance](#)

The last full re-write of the Amelia County Comprehensive Plan was undertaken in 1995. The result of more than a year of work by Planning Commissioners, staff, citizens, and the Board of Supervisors, the plan won an award from the Virginia Chapter of the American Planning Association in 1996. With significant change occurring in Amelia, and more notably in neighboring jurisdictions and the Richmond region, a new plan was undertaken and eventually adopted in early 2001. This plan was not a completely new effort, but, rather, an update of the 1995 Comprehensive Plan containing important additions, data refinements, policies and land use strategies. The basic goals and objectives remained the same, but this updated Plan contained new strategies to achieve those goals.

Further amendments to the Comprehensive Plan were completed in the summer of 2005, focusing on land use policies. In 2011, the County took advantage of a grant-funded program to investigate Urban Development Areas as a method of encouraging growth in best served locations and preserving outlying rural lands. This program led to the adoption of another amendment to the Comprehensive Plan, focusing on growth scenarios for land in and around the Amelia Courthouse.

In addition to previous iterations of the County's Comprehensive Plan, this planning process has involved the review of other County studies and documents including the zoning ordinance, subdivision ordinance, proffer policies, and infrastructure studies.

Reviewing the 2005 Comprehensive Plan

Although it has had several small additions in recent years, Amelia County's last major effort at long range planning was the 2005 Comprehensive Plan. This plan made an inventory of County features, including agriculture, environmental features, history, population and employment, called out concerns and planning issues, created a set of goals, and covered general strategies for county growth and land use in the future.

The major feature of the 2005 plan, as with many comprehensive plans, was the future land use map. This map attempts to organize the County in to five land use zones, each with different goals for future use and density. The five future land use zones contained in the 2005 plan are:

- 1. Village Development Areas**
- 2. Corridor Development Area**
- 3. Rural Residential Development Area**
- 4. Rural Preservation Area**
- 5. Agricultural Preservation Area**

Each of these five zones projects a different level of development intensity for Amelia's future, from Village Development in the existing Courthouse area and at several rural crossroads, to Corridor Development in a narrow band along Route 360, and varying levels of residential density in remaining areas. Suggested minimum lot sizes in the rural and agricultural zones are 3 acres in Rural Residential, 5 acres in Rural Preservation, and 10 acres in Agricultural preservation.

Concerns with the 2005 Comprehensive Plan

1. Most of the designated rural crossroads villages do not have adequate services or infrastructure for village-scaled development.
2. Lack of plans or funding for upgraded transportation and services in outlying areas.
3. Lack of focus on the Courthouse as the town center of Amelia County.
4. Potential for uncontrolled residential growth in the agricultural areas.
5. Challenge of unstructured growth that would require development of public schools and community services in rural and agricultural areas.
6. Potential rural area subdivisions with no requirements for common spaces or recreational improvements.
7. Abundance of awkwardly sized, inefficient and difficult-to-maintain rural residential lots.
8. Potential for leap frog corridor development without public services and infrastructure.

While the 2005 Comprehensive Plan recognizes the importance of the Courthouse area as an important village center, it dilutes that importance by also designating other villages at rural crossroads where there is no water, sewer, or transportation infrastructure capable of supporting village-like development. Also, while the Route 360 corridor is undoubtedly important to the future commercial and employment growth of the County, the designation in the 2005 plan of a narrow strip of corridor development along this route is not consistent with the desires of Amelia residents for quality development that doesn't pattern itself after the strip commercial found along Route 360 in nearby communities. Finally, the 2005 plan's rural area designations do not do enough to discourage rural area subdivisions on lots that are at the same time too large for most homeowners to adequately maintain, and too small to serve in any productive agricultural capacity.

This 2016 Comprehensive Plan aims to do more to encourage development in the County's core economic development areas; the Courthouse village and Route 360 east of the Courthouse. Given the poor outlook for transportation funding for residential or rural crossroads development in outlying areas, development should be focused on these areas where Route 360 can serve its transportation needs.

II. The Comprehensive Plan Process



Chapter II: The Comprehensive Plan Process

The Comprehensive Plan Process

This effort to update the Amelia County Comprehensive Plan began in August of 2015 with the selection of a professional planning consulting firm to assist the County's staff and planning commission in preparing the plan. After reviewing several proposals, the County chose The Cox Company of Charlottesville, Virginia. Bringing experience with similar projects in other Virginia jurisdictions, the role of the consultant was to organize a public input process, facilitate Planning Commission and staff work sessions, prepare maps and graphics, and produce the final document.

The Comprehensive Plan Committee

Appointed by the Amelia County Board of Supervisors, the County's Planning Commission is given the legal responsibility for creating the comprehensive plan according to Virginia state law. For this 2016 plan update, the Planning Commission chose a sub-committee of its members to direct the creation of the plan. This Comprehensive Plan committee was made up of 6 members, each with a long experience both residing in and planning for their community; many having worked on previous comprehensive plan updates. The committee met monthly throughout the planning process, with work sessions focusing on individual issues, policies, and goals for rural preservation, growth areas, public infrastructure, and transportation.

Public Opinion Surveys

The Comprehensive Plan takes on the daunting task of establishing the community's vision of itself 20 years in the future, balancing growth and change with history and the protection of rural lands and values. There is no more important component of that vision than the opinions of Amelia's residents, business owners, and property owners. Common practice for the development of a comprehensive plan incorporates public input through workshops or regularly scheduled planning commission or board of supervisors meetings. In the case of this plan, the planning commission and consultant chose to conduct public opinion surveys to gather community sentiment on a variety of topics, and to gauge the public's reaction to future growth, development, and change.

By using surveying, this planning effort has allowed for a wider variety of public input, letting those with tight schedules, long commutes, and busy family lives to have their voices heard, even if they could not be present in person.

Working with the Planning Commission, The Cox Company designed a 34 question survey that touched on a variety of County demographic, land use, public amenity, and other issues. Topics included in the survey included:

- *General likes and dislikes*
- *Locations for future growth*
- *Employment*
- *Youth issues*
- *Affordability*
- *Development Regulations*
- *Shopping and commuting trends*
- *Local government budgeting*
- *Transportation*
- *Parks and Recreation*

The survey form began with a brief explanation of the Comprehensive Plans, and of the County's effort to update this document. The citizens' survey began on August 27, 2015, with surveys inserted into copies of the Amelia Bulletin Monitor and delivered to all Amelia County postal customers. Surveys could be filled out at home and returned to the County administrative offices by mail. Survey forms were also available for pickup and drop-off at the public library and county administration offices. Finally, the survey could also be completed using an online tool, with a link provided on the County's website.

The citizen's survey was completed on September 30, 2015. In total 528 responses were collected, including online and returned paper survey forms. All survey responses were tabulated electronically, allowing the consultant, staff, and planning commission access not only to average results for all survey questions, but the ability to explore cross-tabulations and sub-sets of data to learn more about the opinions of residents of various ages, lifestyles, and areas.

What do you like best about living on Amelia County?

1. Rural character and open space - 84%
2. Low taxes - 48%
3. Clean air and water - 42%
4. Low population - 40%

What concerns do you have about Amelia's future?

1. Lack of job opportunities - 58%
2. Keeping taxes low - 46%
3. Quality of schools - 43%
4. Rising or Potential crime - 40%

Where do you and your family most frequently shop?

Shopping usually done within Amelia County:

- Banking - 66%
- Car repairs - 58%
- Groceries - 54%
- Pharmacy - 51%

Mostly outside of Amelia:

- Clothing - 94%
- Home improvement - 85%
- Restaurants - 74%
- Fast food - 63%

Growth and Housing

Residential growth pressure, particularly from the Richmond metropolitan area to the east, has seen several new subdivisions built since the comprehensive plan was last updated. The addition of new homes to the County comes with the possibility of expanding the County's tax base and the hope for new customers for local businesses, but also comes with concerns for how new homes will be served by schools and other public services and how the County's rural character is changed when farms or forest tracts become subdivisions. Several survey questions were included to gauge community opinions and ideas on future residential growth in the County.

Demographics and General Background

In order to establish some background, survey respondents were asked questions about themselves, including about where and how they live. Nearly 94% of survey respondents currently own their home, with just over 6% renting, a ratio that isn't uncommon in rural areas of Virginia. When asked about the type of home or property they occupy, 63% answered that they live in single family homes, 17% on farms under 100 acres, 13% on farms over 100 acres, and 7% in mobile homes.

Locations for Future Housing

When it comes to new residential growth in the future, most preferred a continued pattern of rural lots of the type most often seen in the county now, with 57% saying rural area lots greater than 5 acres would be desirable and 47% favoring rural area lot under 5 acres in size. However, there was some support among Amelia citizens for concentrating new residences where public utilities and major roads exist, and even for adding other housing options such as apartments or town houses in certain locations. 30% of survey respondents said that houses on small lots concentrated where they could be served by public utilities would be desirable, while 20% thought that apartments would be desirable in such locations, and 22% favored townhouses served by public utilities.

The most logical location for this type of denser residential development with public utilities would be Amelia Courthouse, where some public water service exists already. In the future, public utilities may also be available in other areas, with the eastern portions of Route 360 the prime candidate. While this issue warrant further study by the County as time passes and residential growth comes to pass, allowing a greater concentration of growth in new or existing villages where it can be served by public utilities and existing road capacity is a valid solution to the subdivision of productive farmland in outlying areas of the County.

Housing Retirees and the Elderly

A surprising result of the citizens' survey was the number of survey respondents who answered that housing for the elderly would be a desirable addition to Amelia County as population grows in the future. In total, 60% of respondents to a question about future housing types indicated that elderly housing or retirement communities would be desirable. This issue has two main components; First, Amelia's rural way of life sees many residents living on farms or larger residential tracts that require greater amounts of property maintenance, while the County's widely spread pattern of rural housing means that residents can spend a great deal of time driving to meet their daily needs. Both of these activities can become more difficult as residents age, leading residents to seek housing that is lower in maintenance and closer to shopping and services. Expanded elderly housing options could allow older residents to continue living in the community that they know and love as they age and their wants, needs, and abilities change. Elderly housing options may include assisted living or nursing home developments, or simply smaller one story or attached homes closer to town.

Second, retirement communities have several advantages as a component of the County's future residential growth. Simply residential subdivision marketed to buyers over 55 years old, these communities may attract local, Richmond area, or other retirees, who value the rural setting of Amelia. Retirement home purchasers contribute to the local economy through taxes and patronage of local businesses, yet do not add students to local school systems, are less likely to contribute to peak hour traffic, and do not require or compete for local jobs.

Commercial and Industrial Growth

While growth in Amelia County's immediate future may be primarily driven by residential growth, with new residents relying heavily on commuting to Chesterfield or other Richmond area locations for employment and shopping, longer term growth of Amelia's own commercial and industrial sectors should be a priority for the County. A larger commercial and industrial sector will enhance and diversify the local tax base, allowing residents work and spend money locally to support the local economy.

Shopping and Commuting

The citizens' survey asked a series of questions relating to employment and shopping patterns. When asked about the location of their employment, 25% answered that they worked within the County or work from home, while 21% work elsewhere in the Richmond area and smaller numbers commute to Farmville or Petersburg. The survey captured a high number of retirees, totaling 37% of respondents. For those working outside of Amelia County, 26% commute more than 30 miles one way, 13% 21-30 miles, 4% 11-20 miles, and only 10% under 10 miles.

When it comes to shopping and services, many Amelia residents look outside the County, either for greater variety, or for convenience if their commute takes them outside the County on a daily basis. While the majority of survey respondents tend to stay within Amelia for banking, car repair, grocery, and pharmacy needs, for all other given categories, non-local shopping was the norm. In the case of furniture, clothing, or movies, no option to buy locally exists, while in other cases such as restaurants, car dealerships, or fast food, residents tended to spend elsewhere despite local options.

Locations for Future Commerce

While survey takers tended to support a dispersed pattern of rural residential growth, they tended to support a much more focused and concentrated commercial and industrial sector. A majority (76%) preferred to see non-farm commercial uses and shopping located along Route 360 east of the Courthouse, 57% along 360 west of the Courthouse, and 54% in the Courthouse area. Only 4% thought that non-farm business would be desirable within rural areas. Respondents felt very strongly (79%) that new industrial growth should be located within the existing industrial park. New industrial along Route 360 east or west of the Courthouse would also be desirable, with respondents accepting these locations at 52% and 45% respectively.

Employment

The growth of employment in Amelia County can help to stem the tide of out-commuting, add to the local tax base, and diversify the County's economy. While many survey respondents used the comments section to suggest that any jobs would be good jobs, the County should carefully consider what businesses or industries would best suit Amelia's rural way of life, as well as carefully weigh the infrastructure needs and environmental costs of potential employers.

When asked about potential future job growth in the County, survey takers trended heavily toward shopping and services, with 71% desiring new retail or shopping center employers in the County, and toward light

industry, with 70% supporting light manufacturing and warehousing uses. Other industries still has strong support, with 50% supporting office or high tech employment, while 36% supported agriculture and timber industries. Heavy industry and manufacturing was less favored, likely due to perceived noise, pollution, or other impacts, but some support for heavy manufacturing did exist.

Survey of Amelia County Youth

In addition to the county-wide survey open to all residents, property owners, and business proprietors, the Planning Commission took a keen interest in Amelia's youth. The Committee made the additional effort of drafting a brief survey for high school juniors and seniors, young people who will likely soon decide whether they will stay in the County to live and work, or whether they will seek employment and further education elsewhere. This survey provided a chance for all involved in this Comprehensive Plan effort to hear the specific opinions of a group whose participation in County life and economy will be vitally important as we plan for Amelia's future 20 years from now.

The school survey was administered during the week of September 28, 2015, with a brief survey form distributed in class to high school juniors and seniors both in public and private schools. A total of 264 responses were collected to 4 questions:

- *Will you stay in Amelia County after high school?*
- *I/you plan to move away, why?*
- *Do you think Amelia County youth have sufficient employment and other opportunities to stay in the County if they want to?*
- *What kinds of job opportunities in the County would interest you?*

The overwhelming majority (85%) of student survey takers said they planned to leave Amelia following high school. Knowing that there are no colleges in the County, it is not surprising that 82% of those planning to leave were planning to pursue higher education. However, 57% saw no job opportunities in the County and 54% saw insufficient entertainment options. When asked if young people in Amelia have sufficient employment and other opportunities to remain locals, students 49% felt that they did not. It is worth noting that this same question was asked in the general survey of all citizens, where 76% felt that there were not sufficient local opportunities for young adults to remain in Amelia County.

Finally, students had the same chance as general survey respondents to weigh in on what job opportunities they would like to see in the County. Students favored retail or shopping center employment (58%), while ranking office and high tech jobs second (39%), followed by agriculture and timber industries (29%) light industry (22%), and heavy industry (15%). These scores show much less support for industrial careers as did the survey of the public at large. Finally, while no specific option was given, a large number of students used additional comment space to promote the desirability of medical and health care sector jobs as desirable careers that might persuade them to continue living in Amelia County.

Survey Conclusions

The chance to hear from Amelia County citizens, business proprietors, property owners, and young people is extremely valuable to the task of planning for the future growth of the County over the coming 20 years. By conducting a survey, many more citizens were able to have their opinions heard than would have been able to attend in-person workshops or presentations. Survey responses have been incorporated in a variety of ways into the goals, plans, policies and programs that make up the Comprehensive Plan.

Survey Lessons Learned:

We value our rural way of life

.... but we're concerned about the lack of jobs and services

We're concerned about elderly housing

We want business to stay near the Courthouse and 360 corridor

We don't do much shopping in Amelia, but we would like to

Our students are more optimistic than average about opportunities in the County

.... but Students are less interested in industry jobs than the overall population

New residents are just as interested in rural way of life as long-time residents

Public Workshops

To supplement the input gathered from both survey efforts, the Comprehensive Plan Committee, County staff, and consultants hosted two public workshops giving interested citizens the chance to hear about the results of the public surveys, and to ask questions and give further input relating to the Comprehensive Plan update. These two events included one evening workshop and one afternoon workshop during January 2016. Both events were well attended, yielding excellent discussion and valuable community input.

III. Demographics

Chapter III: Demographics



Population

While Amelia County lost population during the early to mid 20th century, the County has grown since 1970. Growth has been modest at some times, and rapid at others, including a surge of growth during the 1990s that neared 30% for the decade. Growth in recent years has slowed, likely due to nationwide economic effects and overall slowing of suburban growth.

Amelia County Population 1920- 2010

Year	Population	%Change
1920	9,800	
1930	8,799	-8%
1940	8,495	-5%
1950	7,908	-7%
1960	7,815	-1%
1970	7,592	-3%
1980	8,405	11%
1990	8,787	5%
2000	11,400	30%
2010	12,690	11%
2015	12,903 (estimate)	2%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

It is very important to note Amelia County's regional context when considering population growth. As an outlying part of growing Richmond region, the County's future growth will be heavily influenced by the growth of neighboring jurisdictions. In particular, Chesterfield County has seen rapid growth in the decades of the 1980s, 1990s, and 2000s. Given this strong neighboring growth, its proximity to the Amelia County line, and the convenient transportation links between the two counties along US 360, it is very likely that future Chesterfield growth will spur growth in Amelia as well.

Population Growth of Neighboring Counties 1990 - 2015

	1990	2000		2010		2015	
Amelia	8,787	11,400	30%	12,690	11%	12,903	2%
Chesterfield	209,000	259,903	24%	316,236	22%	335,687	6%
Powhatan	16,000	22,377	40%	28,046	25%	28,031	0%
Cumberland	7,800	9,017	16%	10,052	11%	9,719	-3%
Prince Edward	17,300	19,720	14%	23,368	18%	22,952	-2%
Nottoway	15,000	15,725	5%	15,853	1%	15,673	-1%
Dinwiddie	21,000	24,533	17%	28,001	14%	27,852	-1%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Population Forecasting

The growth of Amelia County, its neighboring jurisdictions, the Richmond region, or the Commonwealth of Virginia is in a constant state of change, influenced by factors as diverse as national economic news, the decisions of major employers, and generational housing trends. For this reason, accurate forecasting of future population growth is difficult to achieve, if not impossible. The Virginia Employment Commission attempts to predict future population growth using a proprietary model, and at this time predicts modest growth in Amelia County over the coming 25 years, averaging roughly 5% for each 10 year period between US Census studies.

Virginia Employment Commission Population Forecast

Year	Population	%Change
2010	12,690	
2020	13,413	5.7%
2030	13,968	4.1%
2040	14,449	3.4%

Source: Virginia Employment Commission

While the rates of growth predicted by the VEC would be easy enough for the County to absorb and manage, we must acknowledge that much higher rates of growth are possible, and have been experienced in Amelia and neighboring areas in the past. Amelia experienced growth of over 30% for the decade of the 1990s, while Powhatan grew over 40% during the same decade and Chesterfield County growth touched 48% growth during the 1980s. Given its small base population, Amelia County has the potential to experience a high percentage of population change very quickly. A single large subdivision or development project, of the type often seen in nearby areas of Chesterfield County, could result in a sudden population surge during a brisk real estate market. For this reason, Amelia must plan for future growth at a variety of scales, planning for realistic scenarios, as well as those scenarios that, while they may be unlikely, are possible and would result in huge impacts on County services, finances, and culture.

This Comprehensive Plan uses three population growth scenarios to analyze a broad range of future growth possibilities, from slow to explosive. As is many things, it is better to plan for the worst than to be caught unprepared.

2016 Comprehensive Plan Population Scenarios

Growth Scenario	Ten Year Growth	2025 Population	2035 Population
Slow - Moderate	5%	13,548	14,225
Moderate - Rapid	12%	14,451	16,185
Rapid - Explosive	25%	16,128	20,160

Employment

As with many rural counties, Amelia has a strong agricultural economy, including crop operations, nursery stock growing, and livestock farming, but is limited in other commercial, industrial, and service employment categories. Overall though, Amelia has a relatively low unemployment rate at 5.3%, roughly in line with state and regional averages, and slightly better than national rates of around 6.2%.

Top 10 Amelia County Employers

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1. Amelia County School Board | 6. McDonald's |
| 2. Amelia Life Care LLC | 7. Food Lion |
| 3. County of Amelia | 8. Goodman Truck and Tractor Company |
| 4. Star Children's Dress Company | 9. Amelia Lumber Company Inc. |
| 5. Glenwood Farms | 10. Swift Creek Forest Products |

Source: *Virginia Employment Commission*

While data shows that Amelia County residents are employed at similar rates to state and regional averages, many find employment outside of the County by commuting to Chesterfield, among other regional employment destinations. Unfortunately, when many citizens are commuting out of the county for work, there can be resulting impacts on the local economy. When Amelia residents work in neighboring jurisdictions, the taxes paid by their employers goes to fund the locality in which the employer is located, meaning that the work of many Amelia residents ultimately helps to fund schools, services, and improvements in Chesterfield and other nearby areas rather than in their home county. Also, when residents commute daily to neighboring jurisdictions, they are more likely to combine their work trip with shopping, dining out, and other spending rather than contributing to Amelia County businesses.

Commuting Patterns

People who live and work in Amelia	1,012
In-coming Commuters	1,409
Out-going Commuters	4,145
<i>Net Out-Commuters</i>	<i>2,736</i>

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Affordability

As is typical of many rural communities, Amelia is a relatively affordable place to live, and more specifically, to buy or rent a home. With fewer services, longer travel distances to employment and commerce centers, and lower taxes, the County has generally lower housing costs as compared to the Richmond region. In one key measure of affordability, 27% of Amelia residents spend greater than 30% of their household income on housing expenses, compared to 34% for the Richmond region as a whole. However, this relative affordability could potentially have the effect of attracting higher levels of residential growth to the County, bringing Richmond area commuters while making housing less affordable for local workers. The affordability of housing should remain an area of focus as the County grows, and a key measure of the suitability of new development proposals.

Spending and Leakage

Amelia County has a limited retail and service sector economy, along with a resident population that commutes extensively within a larger region for work or for shopping. Because of these factors, Amelia sees a much lower rate of retail and service sector spending per capita than other communities. While state-wide per capita spending totals \$12,000 per resident per year, spending in Amelia County totals only \$4,400 per resident per year, while nearby Chesterfield County nearly equals the state average at \$11,950 per resident per year. These lower rates of consumer spending directly affect the County's tax base, sending money earned by Amelia residents into the local coffers of Chesterfield and other nearby jurisdictions. In order to plan for a secure and prosperous future, Amelia should be looking to return consumer spending to the County by encouraging a variety of local business opportunities, thus allowing residents to work and shop locally, contributing to the betterment of their own community.

Amelia County Consumer Spending

	2014 Sales	Per Capita
Amelia	\$56,600,000	\$4,400
Chesterfield	\$3,900,000,000	\$11,950
Virginia	\$96,200,000,000	\$12,000

Sales leakage is an attempt to quantify the dollar value of Amelia residents' out-of-county spending on consumer goods and services. If all other factors are held to be equal, a comparison between Amelia's per capita spending and that of Chesterfield County or the Commonwealth of Virginia gives us a basic count of the

dollars that Amelia businesses are missing out on, and by extension, the value of sales for which Amelia does not collect local taxes. This effect is most pronounced for certain categories in which Amelia is not well represented, meaning that county residents have few, or sometimes no, local choices, forcing them to shop elsewhere.

Amelia County Sales Leakage

Compared to Chesterfield County sales per capita:	\$7,550
Compared to Commonwealth of Virginia sales per capita:	\$7,626

Areas of Most Significant Per Capita Sales Leakage

Food and Beverage Stores:	\$680
Clothing:	\$609
General Merchandise:	\$1,954
Restaurants and Drinking Establishments:	\$1,179

In order to diversify and improve the Amelia County economy, the county's future plans for growth and development should focus on a more balanced set of land uses than it has seen over the past several decades. By supporting new business growth along with residential, the county can build a more resilient economy, develop a stronger tax base, and capture the earning and spending power of its citizens to continue improving Amelia as a place to live, work, and shop. Amelia has a strong set of local economic resources which have historically provided substantial economic stability as well as a reasonable level of prosperity for the County. While certain economic factors, including interest rates, energy prices, and inflation, are well outside of the County's control, Amelia can use future decisions about facilities, schools, environmental protection, and land use to protect existing industries, promote new business growth, and attract new residents and employers to the county.

Amelia County has a host of competitive business advantages to leverage in the future, including its natural resources, particularly the agricultural and forest lands. In addition, the County has a variety of human resources which enhance its capability and potential for economic strength. Amelia's primary economic resources include:

- **High quality natural resources such as forests, surface and ground water supplies, farmland, clean air, developable land, natural recreational resources, historic areas and scenic views.**
- Proximity to economic, cultural, government, and education centers in Richmond, Farmville, and surrounding areas.
- Major, high capacity highway infrastructure in Route 360.
- Relatively low cost of living in terms of housing and local taxes when compared to other jurisdictions in the Richmond region.

However, the County does suffer from several disadvantages in terms of employment and economic development activity and potential, including:

- **Very limited areas served by public sewer and water**
- **Limited recreational facilities, cultural resources, health care facilities, and other resources that provide a more complete community.**
- **A small number of existing employers and few major industries.**
- **Intensifying competition, automation and productivity improvements that require a more highly trained and more specialized labor force.**

IV. Vision & Goals

Chapter IV:
Goals, Policies, & Objectives



The Comprehensive Plan is intended to guide the growth and development of the County for the next ten to twenty years and beyond. It is viewed as a visionary long-range plan that is founded upon goals that best reflect the values, ethos, and needs of its current and future citizens. For consistency with the enabling statutes of Virginia, the plan is a dynamic document, to be updated every five years, that is intended to promote, preserve and protect the health, safety and general welfare of the community.

In the broadest sense, the Goals of the Comprehensive Plan are general, but bold and venturesome, statements concerning an aspect of the County's desired ultimate physical, social, demographic, and economic environment. Goals must be anticipatory in nature: They are structured based on the reality that Amelia County will not remain stagnant, but that it will experience natural growth (and sometimes exponential growth) that will impact its environment, governmental resources, and existing land uses.

For Amelia, nine major goals categories are employed to organize the individual components of the County's vision for 2016 Comprehensive Plan Update. The major goals categories set the tone for County planning decisions in terms of the values that Amelia and its leaders embrace as well as the desired quality of life for its citizens over the next decade and beyond.

1. Community Character and Vision

**Protect the rural character, cultural heritage and scenic beauty of the County.
Recognize that these are valuable and irreplaceable resources.**

2. Agriculture, Forestry and Natural Resources

Agriculture and forestry industries represent the foundation of the County's economy and its most significant natural resource. Their stewardship, support, protection and continuation should guide Amelia's future land use and zoning decisions.

3. Development Areas

Concentrate future County growth in the County's Development Areas; these include the Courthouse Village, Corridor Crossroads Mixed-Use, and Corridor Crossroads Economic Development planning areas.

4. Economic Development

Work to attract new businesses that employ Amelia citizens and contribute to the local tax base, through business-friendly regulatory practices and other incentives in growth areas.

5. Transportation

Maintain the capacity and quality the Route 360 corridor throughout the County; ensure that future development patterns do not further diminish the levels of service and safety of the County's rural road system.

6. Education

Invest in a quality public school system that prepares students to be productive and successful members of the community.

7. Culture, History and Recreation

Preserve, expand and promote Amelia's historic sites, landmarks, parks, community attractions, recreational opportunities, and open space areas in ways that bring tourism revenue to County businesses.

8. Government Infrastructure, Services and Public Facilities

Ensure adequate water supply, utilities and infrastructure essential to serve the projected County growth. Continually improve County services and facilities, including fire, rescue, law enforcement, utilities, and related infrastructure.

9. Fiscal Planning

Ensure the County's responsibility to undertake fiscally responsible, disciplined decisions that adequately serve both our current citizens and the County's future growth.

Amelia's Planning Pathways: Strategies and Objectives

Statements related to Strategies and Implementation Objectives represent a sub-category of each major goal. They can be viewed as a pathway towards implementing the Plan. These statements express the kinds of interrelated policies and actions that are necessary to achieve the stated goals. The objectives provide direct guidance for County leaders but do not assign specific operational or fiscal responsibility to any given policy or action. The latter will be the subject of a subsequent chapter of this plan. On the following pages, policies and action plans are suggested for each of the above nine goals. These statements serve as the lynchpins for advancing the recommendations for the Comprehensive Plan and the Future Land Use Plan:

1. Community Character and Vision

Protect the rural character, cultural heritage and scenic beauty of the County. Recognize that these are valuable and irreplaceable resources.

Strategies and Implementation Objectives

- A. Establish regulations that work together to protect the scenic, cultural, ecological and environmental character of the County's rural and agricultural areas.
- 8. Establish clearly defined geographical Planning Areas that recognize the areas for (1) active, fully served development and (2) agricultural and conservation area preservation.
- C. Designate rural area secondary road corridors that are susceptible to continued frontage development; revise zoning regulations for rural lot development to limit frontage development opportunities.
- D. Protect views and scenic assets of the Route 360 corridor; prepare a corridor master plan, corridor overlay zoning district, and site design guidelines for Route 360.
- E. Revise zoning and subdivision application requirements to focus on more creative cluster provisions.
- F. Create policies and plans for the Courthouse Village that recognize and respect the scale and ambience of its existing community character.
- G. Encourage residential development to locate within the planning areas that are served by public water, sewer and other infrastructure.
- H. Develop governance policies and programs that ensure that Amelia County continues to be a safe and attractive community in which to live and work.

2. Agriculture, Forestry and Natural Resources

Agriculture and forestry industries represent the foundation of the County's economy and its most significant natural resource. Their stewardship, support, protection and continuation should guide Amelia's future land use and zoning decisions.

Strategies and Implementation Objectives

- A. Land use decisions should respect the goals and policies of the Comprehensive Plan's revised rural and agricultural planning areas.
- B. Residential lot size, density and subdivision requirements in rural and agricultural planning areas should be consistent with and upgraded to fulfill the policies and guidelines of the Comprehensive Plan.
- C. Take steps to discourage leap-frog subdivision development in the rural areas.
- D. The "Right to Farm" should be a governing policy with respect to potential land use conflicts in the rural and agricultural areas; establish policies to allow working farms to have the same agri-business opportunities for tourism and commercial events as farm wineries.
- E. Woodlands and open spaces along the County's rural road corridors should be preserved to the extent feasible by providing adequate screening, buffering and other planning practices consistent with rural land use policies.
- F. Family subdivision rights should be preserved, while promoting a policy of locating family division residences to ensure maximization of residual farming land.
- G. Family division lots should have access onto public roads from existing farm entrances where feasible, eliminating the need for multiple access points to individual properties.
- H. When permitted in the rural and agricultural areas, residential cluster subdivisions should be the preferred form of residential development over conventional lots that front on existing rural roads.
- I. Zoning regulations and design guidelines for rural residential cluster subdivisions should be amended to incentivize the cluster form of development; regulations should reflect and make adjustments to ensure the appropriate scale, density, land area, quality, location, and jurisdictional impacts of any new development.
- J. Educate landowners about voluntary methods and incentives for preservation and conservation, including use value taxation, the establishment of conservation easements, and other available preservation methods.
- K. Establish plans for and protect the County's watersheds and stream systems where drinking water reservoirs may eventually be located.
- L. Critical slopes, stream valleys, wetlands, floodplains, unbuildable soils and other environmentally sensitive natural resources should be not be developed; these areas should be designated by the Comprehensive Plan as Environmental Planning Areas.
- M. Appropriate levels of environmental standards and watershed protection measures should be applied to all rural area land uses, particularly on properties that are located near streams as well as within potential future water reservoir watersheds.
- N. To support the preservation of the most viable and productive farmland, which is essential to the County's economy, maintain the County's rural character, protecting its natural resources, and enhancing the quality of life of the County's citizens, locating utility scale solar and related battery storage facilities on agricultural lands that has been an active agricultural operation within the five (5) year period preceding application for such use should be discouraged. Zoning regulations should be adopted to help mitigate any negative impacts of such facilities on the surrounding community and the rural character of the Count, and to help guide prospective applicants to the most suitable locations for these uses, consistent with the community's goals established in the County's Comprehensive plan. Applicants and landowners should be encouraged to maintain agricultural uses and operations on project sites where the land is suitable and not necessary or usable for placing solar energy facilities. For the purposes of this paragraph, "agricultural operation" means any operation devoted to the bona fide production of crops.

3. Development Areas

Concentrate future County growth in the County's "Development Areas"; these include the Courthouse Village, Corridor Crossroads Mixed-Use, and Corridor Crossroads Economic Development planning areas.

Strategies and Implementation Objectives

- A. Designate appropriate land area in the three Development Areas that will be sufficient to accommodate the County's long-range (>20 years) population and employment growth.
- B. Encourage projects in the residential portions of the Development Areas to respect traditional neighborhood development principles, including higher density, village-scaled streets, attractive architecture, mixed uses, and flexible design standards.
- C. Work with developers and property owners to create well-planned projects that respond to the range of Development Area densities recommended by the Future Land Use Plan; discourage premature development projects that may dilute the development capacity of these areas.
- D. Establish a phased capital improvements plan consistent with the Future Land Use Map that ensures public water and sewer service in the Development Areas.
- E. Establish transportation master plans for each Development Area project that address intra- and inter-parcel connectivity that fits within an overall scheme that reduces pressure on existing roads.
- F. Adopt enhanced zoning and subdivision standards and guidelines that afford developer's flexibility that cannot be otherwise achieved via conventional zoning practices.
- G. Continue to recognize Jetersville as a Village Planning Area while emphasizing modest growth and density within geographical boundaries for the village.
- H. Conduct planning and feasibility studies that address the phased implementation of public water and sewer improvements to serve the Development Areas.
- I. Update the County's proffer system to address the equitable distribution of fiscal responsibility for public infrastructure, including transportation improvements that are consistent with the long-range build-out requirements of the Development Areas.

4. Economic Development

Work to attract new businesses that employ Amelia citizens and contribute to the local tax base, through business-friendly regulatory practices and other incentives in growth areas.

Strategies and Implementation Objectives

- A. Encourage a diversified economic base that respects existing businesses as well as the goals and policies for the rural and agricultural planning areas.
8. Develop plans that promote tourism and agri-business in the rural and agricultural areas.

- C. Promote a balance between jobs and housing that emphasizes in-County employment opportunities over out-commuting.
- D. Designate sufficient land area of suitable size, terrain features, access conditions and location for future economic development and associated growth.
- E. Encourage future non-agricultural economic development to locate within the Corridor Crossroads Economic Development planning areas.
- F. Work with property owners within the designated development areas to market and attract appropriate industry and businesses to the County.
- G. Consider pro-actively initiating commercial and industrial zoning amendments in the Corridor Crossroads Mixed-Use planning area and the Crossroads Economic Development planning areas.
- H. Encourage appropriately-scaled infill business and service development within the Courthouse Town Center Development Area.
- I. Prioritize the development of new sewer treatment facilities to serve the County's Development Areas.
- J. Prioritize the development of water supply sources to serve the County's Development Areas.
- K. Work with the public school system to assess the life-style needs of the County's youth; develop and promote job recruitment and job training programs to retain Amelia's high school graduates.

5. Transportation

Maintain the capacity and quality the Route 360 corridor throughout the County; ensure that future development patterns do not further diminish the levels of service and safety of the County's rural road system.

Strategies and Implementation Objectives

- A. Preserve the level of service, functional characteristics, and aesthetics of the Route 360 corridor in recognition of its major inter-regional arterial function.
- B. Prepare a Route 360 corridor access plan that is consistent with the Future Land Use Plan for the Courthouse Village and the Crossroads Mixed-Use and Economic Development planning areas.
- C. Adopt a corridor overlay district and design guidelines for the Route 360 corridor.
- D. Employ the Comprehensive Plan's transportation concepts and policies to guide the location, designation and preservation of future public rights of way needed to provide intra- and inter-parcel access within the Development Areas.
- E. Prepare adopt an Official Transportation Map to be employed in reserving rights-of-way for a system of minor and major collectors within the Development Areas.
- F. Evaluate the capacity and condition of the County's rural road network and determine physical and fiscal impact of continued residential growth in the rural and agricultural areas.

- G. Create a stronger identity for the Courthouse *Village*; develop an entrance gateway plan to better identify and provide improved access to the village.
- H. Ensure coordination between transportation and land use decisions and development; assess the traffic impacts and right of way requirements for all development projects.
- I. Ensure that new development projects minimize traffic impacts on existing roads while ensuring that inter- and intra-parcel connectivity is maximized via the creation of new streets.
- J. Develop road and street regulations and design standards that are compatible with system requires for the range of land uses anticipated by the Future Land Use Plan.
- K. Expand and establish new site parking standards that reflect the contemporary range of land uses anticipated by the Future Land Use Plan.
- L. Improve the monitoring and communications process with *VDOT*; work with *VDOT* on a regular basis to ensure the compatibility of County transportation priorities and initiatives and the *VDOT* planning process.
- M. Monitor traffic accidents, citizen input, traffic violations and traffic growth to identify and prioritize locations for safety and other related road improvements.
- N. Evaluate the feasibility of a County hiking and bikeway system than integrates with goals for agricultural, preservation, recreation and tourism.

6. Education

Invest in a quality public school system that prepares students to be productive and successful members of the community.

Strategies and Implementation Objectives

- A. Plan for future County growth to be concentrated within the Development Areas where either existing school facilities are located or where new school locations could efficiently serve future growth.
- B. Focus on long-range school planning, with an emphasis on the quality of its existing facilities and opportunities to expand and enhance existing campuses.
- C. Work with the school board to assess the potential needs and location for additional school property in the Development Areas to serve future County growth; employ proffers to reserve or acquire future school sites.
- D. Support the County's elected School Board in developing appropriate long-range plans for school facilities, maintenance, technology, and curriculum in order to provide a quality public school system that is an asset to the County.

7. Culture, History and Recreation

Preserve, expand and promote Amelia's historic sites, landmarks, parks, community attractions, recreational opportunities, and open space areas in ways that bring tourism revenue to County businesses.

Strategies and Implementation Objectives

- A. The County should initiate an open space and recreation master plan (integrating State and inter-jurisdictional planning objectives) that identifies the desired scope and location of expanded and future parks, recreation areas, "greenways" and common open space networks.
8. Create policies and regulations that diminish opportunities for incompatible development in areas surrounding historic places, landmarks, and buildings.
- C. Work with the private sector to establish a coordinated "Amelia Trails" marketing concept that capitalizes on its agricultural, historic, open space, and cultural resources.

8. Government Infrastructure, Services and Public Facilities

Ensure adequate water supply, utilities and infrastructure essential to serve the projected County growth. Continually improve County services and facilities, including fire, rescue, law enforcement, utilities, and related infrastructure. Utilities should include compatible alternative or "green" energy systems. (amended 9/18/2019)

Strategies and Implementation Objectives

- A. Public Water Supply (Domestic and Fire Protection)
 1. Prioritize the essential need for focused planning for water supply and distribution facilities to serve future growth.
 2. Conduct a preliminary design and engineering study for a long-range water supply and distribution plan.
 3. Develop watershed management plans and strategies that ensure protection of the candidate surface water impoundment locations and their contributing streams and parent watersheds within the County.
 4. Continue to evaluate the availability other water supply sources from outside the County.
 5. Include the phased budgeting for water supply and distribution planning, engineering, permitting, land acquisition, and construction in future capital improvements plans.
 6. Protect the County's public groundwater wells by and instituting well-head protection measures within existing areas and locations planned for future development.
 7. Revise the existing proffer policy in anticipation of future capital expenditures for the development of a comprehensive water supply and distribution system compatible with the Future Land Use Plan.

B. Public Sewer (Treatment and Distribution)

1. Continue to monitor the existing sewerage treatment facility to ensure adequate capacity to serve near-term growth within the Courthouse Village development area.
2. Prepare a facilities master plan for public sewer treatment and sewer main collectors that responds to the intermediate- to long-term growth demands in the Development Areas.
3. Assess the fiscal requirements to provide upgraded facilities and adequately plan for the implementation of these capital improvements.

C. Fire, Rescue and Law Enforcement

1. Continually assess fire, rescue and law enforcement system performance to ensure adequate levels of service.
 2. Develop a long-range plan for fire, rescue and law enforcement that responds to projected population and employment growth.
 3. Identify issues related to providing services to remote areas of the County.
 4. Develop fire, rescue, and law enforcement policies for use in evaluation of rezoning and special use permit applications; play an active role in reviewing and commenting on land use applications.
- S. Revise the proffer policy to determine a "fair" fiscal impact allocation between future residential growth in the County's Development Areas and the outlying rural areas.

D. Public Utilities and Other Service Providers

1. Maintain an effective working relationship with all service providers to ensure the best possible provision of services for the County's citizens and businesses.
2. Coordinate with service providers on an ongoing basis to develop long-range master plans that prioritize the areas of the Future Land Use Plan that are planned for intensive development.
3. Encourage service providers to establish and communicate internal service provider goals and policies that are consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and Future Land Use Plan.
4. Continue to pursue improvements in the availability of broadband internet communications within the County, through available grant resources and outreach to commercial suppliers.
5. Coordinate with all service providers in the development of land use policies and regulations to direct and manage future growth.
6. Develop land use regulations that establishment guidelines and coordinate the exchange of plans, plats and other land use application information by and between service providers.

9. Fiscal Planning

Ensure the County's responsibility to undertake fiscally responsible, disciplined decisions that adequately serve both our current citizens and the County's future growth.

Strategies and Implementation Objectives

- A. Continually monitor the required balance between evolving growth-led demands for County services and conservative funding responsibilities; recognize the relationship between fiscal planning, comprehensive planning, and the phased implementation of capital improvements.
- B. Develop plans that anticipate the scope and costs of capital improvements well in advance of projected need.
- C. Determine and assess the fiscal impacts of all project-specific land use planning and zoning decisions.
- D. Ensure the participation of the Planning Commission and all County departments in the preparation of capital improvements plans and other decisions that are guided by the Comprehensive Plan.
- E. Develop policies that require future development to pay its "fair share" in providing for adequate public facilities.
- F. Prioritize new development to be located in the County's Development Areas and other areas where public services and infrastructure can be efficiently provided.
- G. Consider fiscal policies and government support that can benefit the recruitment of economic development and other revenue generating enterprise.
- H. Expenditures on services, utilities and facilities should be focused on achieving a demonstrated return on investment in locations consistent with the goals of the Comprehensive Plan and solid marketplace expectations.
- I. Update the County's proffer policy for compatibility with the objectives of the Comprehensive Plan and identified capital needs of the County; ensure that the new proffer policy is consistent with 2016 legislation that limits the extent to which proffers can be applied.

V. Future Land Use

Chapter V: The Future Land Use Plan



Introduction

The Future Land Use Plan translates the goals and objectives of the Comprehensive Plan into a map that depicts the framework for the type, quantity and location of the County's future growth. This section divides the County into various land use categories based on their desirability for future development, their ability to support development, and their value to the County's rural way of life.

Over the past ten years between 95% and 97% of the County's residential growth has occurred in rural areas. During this period, over 3,000 acres of farmland has been lost and 50 farms have ceased operation. Under hypothetical growth scenarios of 12% and 25% over the next 20 years, development could consume 12,000 to 35,000 acres of the rural and agricultural areas. Many of Amelia's rural lands are already impacted by residential lots of varying sizes, non-agricultural uses, public rights-of-way, stream valleys, and other areas not available for future development. If, in fact, residential development consumed 35,000 acres by 2035, one-third of Amelia's rural areas would be permanently removed from its agricultural base.

A continuation of rural development trends runs counter to the County's goals for its future. From an infrastructure standpoint, the County is not equipped to address the type of explosive suburban-styled growth that Chesterfield and Henrico experienced in the 1970s, 1980s, and is still continuing today. While Amelia has not yet seen such growth, it must prepare for such a scenario now if it is committed to protecting its rural identity in the future.

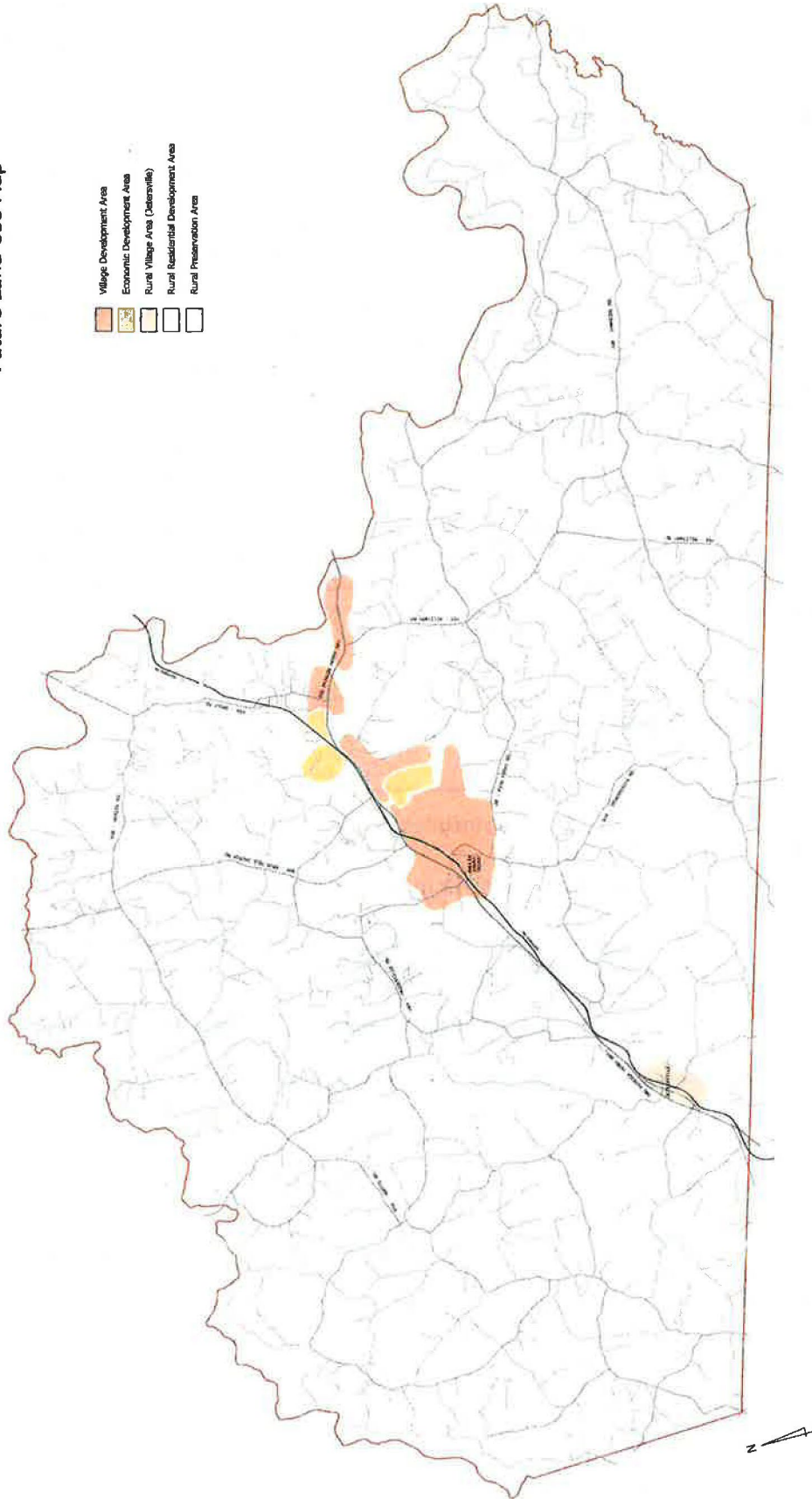
If the County's stated goal of preserving its rural and agricultural areas is to be achieved, three major components of this plan will each be equally important:

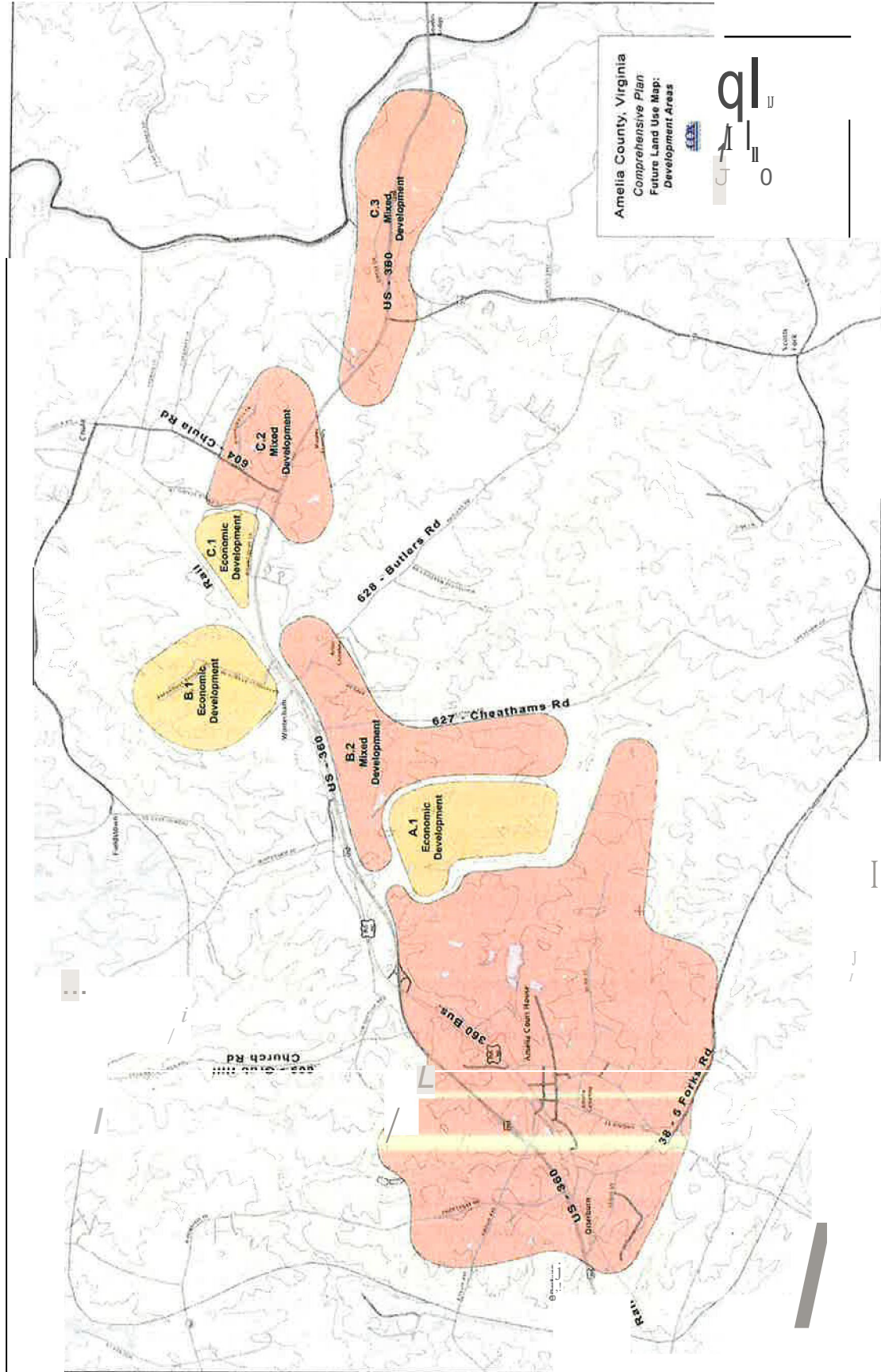
Three Principles for the Future of Amelia County

1. **Concentrate growth in the development areas**
2. **Commit to providing adequate water, sewer, and transportation infrastructure to the development areas**
3. **Protect rural areas from uncontrolled residential growth**

The land use trends for the coming decades will be much like the previous. The main difference will be that Amelia County will likely be faced for the first time with the high probability of exponential growth similar to that Chesterfield County experienced a generation ago. Without well-planned areas with adequate public utilities, the outlying areas will be forced to absorb this growth, and with it, the agricultural legacy of Amelia County will be further diminished.

Amelia County, Virginia
Comprehensive Plan
Future Land Use Map





NEW PLANNING AREA DESIGNATIONS

The 2016 Comprehensive Plan recommends a set of redefined and reconfigured Future Land Use Plan designations. These are referred to as Planning Areas. Those areas designated for the highest level of future growth, as well as future public services, are designated as Development Areas. These new designations include six major planning areas that are geographically referenced on the Future Land Use Map.

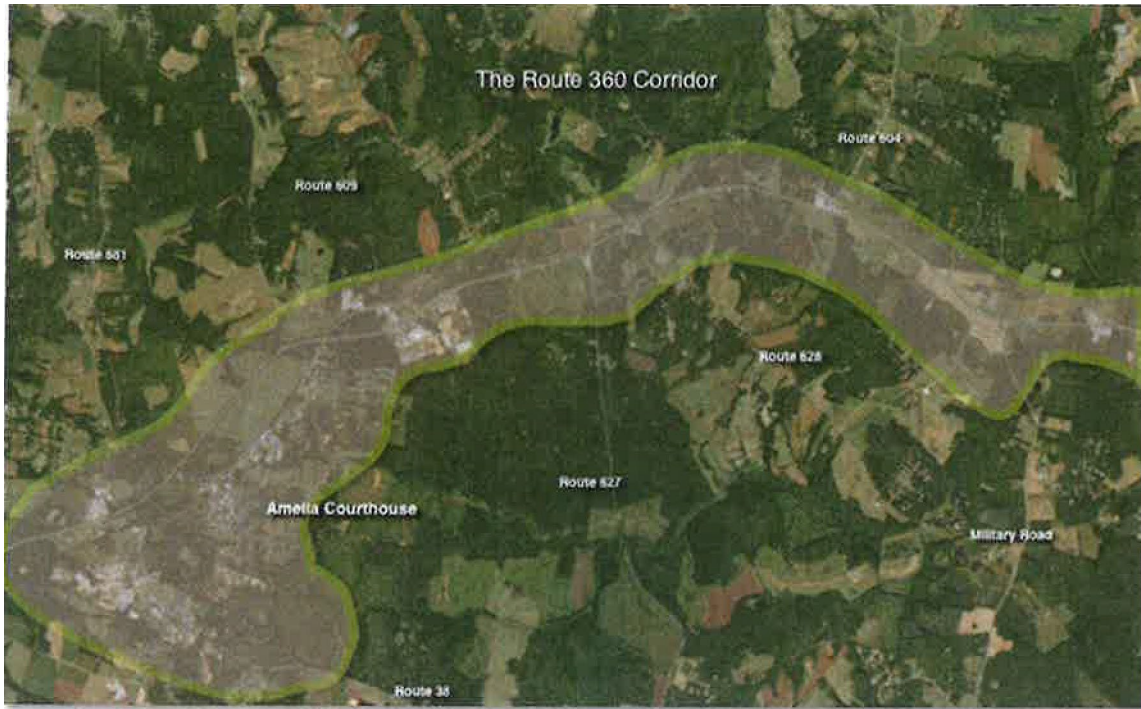
- A. Amelia Courthouse (Town Center) Development Area**
- B. Corridor Crossroads Mixed-Use Development Area**
- C. Corridor Economic Development (Industrial) Area**
- D. Rural Residential Community Area**
- E. Rural and Agricultural Preservation Area**
- F. Jetersville Rural Village Planning Area**

A. Amelia Courthouse (Town Center) Development Area

1. Respect the historic and cultural importance of the Courthouse complex.
2. Respect the character and scale of the existing mixed retail and services uses.
3. Recognize the potential for in-fill development within Courthouse residential areas.
4. Promote higher density residential, with a mix of single and multi-family units.
5. Encourage both affordable and upper market units of various types and sizes.
6. Provide for densities in the range of 4 units/acre (single family) to 12+ units/ac (multi-family).
7. Establish an attractive Entrance Corridor plan for village access from Rt. 360.
8. Require public utilities and urban infrastructure for future developments.
9. Develop a detailed Town Center design plan upon adoption of the new Comprehensive Plan.
10. Establish a wider range of permitted land uses in the village.
11. Draft contemporary districts that embrace performance-zoning and form-based criteria.
12. Limit the location of future school and public facilities to the Courthouse area.

B. Corridor Crossroads Mixed-Use Development Area

1. Identify key corridor crossroad development areas along Rt. 360.
2. Promote well-planned, mixed-density land uses at each crossroads location.
3. Discourage scattered commercial and residential development.
4. Plan for a mix of residential uses at different sizes and prices.
5. Emphasize suburban residential development with community/neighborhood commercial.
6. Respect existing commercial and industrial land uses; encourage quality expansion.
7. Establish access plans and transportation criteria for new developments.
8. Plan for a sewer and water service district to provide utilities to the development area.
9. Establish Entrance Corridor overlay zoning for the Rt. 360 corridor.
10. Revise proffer strategies to encourage development in the planning area.



Recognizing the vulnerability of the highway for leapfrog development, the Comprehensive Plan establishes Development Service Areas along the Route 360 Corridor. These include the Amelia Courthouse Development Area, the Corridor Crossroads Mixed-Use Area, and the Corridor Economic Development Area

C. Corridor Economic Development (Industrial) Area

1. Identify key industrial development areas accessible from Rt. 360 corridor.
2. Industrial areas should be separate from the Corridor Crossroads Mixed Use areas.
3. Discourage scattered industrial development outside of designated areas.
4. Promote compact, high density development, with efficient use of available land.
5. Place land use emphasis on clean industry (warehousing, assembly, light manufacturing).
6. Discourage industrial uses fronting on, or visible from, the Rt. 360 corridor.
7. Establish traffic and transportation criteria for new development.
8. Require public facilities and urban infrastructure for future development.
9. Establish stronger site development standards; in particular landscape and buffer plans.

D. Rural Residential Community Area

1. Re-evaluate the current Primary Rural Residential Community Area boundaries.
2. Respect existing agricultural uses and encourage expansion.
3. Reclassify productive farms and selected rural portions to Agriculture Preservation.
4. Encourage inter-parcel connectivity to decrease impacts on existing roads.
5. Discourage further residential road frontage development.

6. Establish stronger residential design standards; e.g. access, landscape and buffer plans.
7. Require combined entrances for residential lots that qualify for road frontage location.
8. Establish a long-range transportation plan for the planning area.
9. Determine the true cost of providing county services at full build-out.

E. Rural and Agricultural Preservation Area

1. Re-evaluate the current Agricultural and Rural Preservation Area boundaries.
2. Merge planning areas; establish a consolidated plan for agricultural and rural land uses.
3. Promote existing farming, agricultural industry and companion land uses to include, but not limited to, utility scale solar energy systems or other like "green" energy generation systems (Amended 9/18/2019).
4. Strengthen rezoning policy and requirements for the planning area.
5. Promote cluster development for new subdivisions.
6. Establish density bonuses for well planned, agriculture sensitive cluster development.
7. Establish enhanced design and open space guidelines for cluster subdivisions.
8. Promote and develop incentives for the establishment of conservation easements.
9. Encourage property consolidation to improve critical mass of farms.
10. Establish a long-range transportation improvements plan for the rural area.
11. Revise proffer study and establish proffer expectations that discourage rural rezoning.

F. Jetersville Rural Village Area

1. Jetersville is historically recognized as a rural village worthy of designation.
2. The designated boundary should follow physical and topographic reference points.
3. Planning should not anticipate future public water and sewer service to the village.
4. Existing uses should be respected and protected.
5. Underperforming non-residential uses should be encouraged to rehabilitate.
6. Land north of the Route 360 Corridor should be designated for rural preservation.
7. Enterprise uses are encouraged at the most westerly and easterly Rt. 360/671 intersections.
8. Commercial uses are encouraged at the central Rt. 360/642 village gateway access point.
9. Future residential infill should be developed at densities of approximately 1 unit per acre.



The Comprehensive Plan establishes Jetersville as the sole Rural Village Area planning area. Prior plans for rural villages in more remote locations have not matured as planned and are not recommended in light of conflicting rural and preservation area goals.

DEVELOPMENT AREAS

Three of the areas included in this plan - the Amelia Courthouse (Town Center) Development Area, the Corridor Crossroads Mixed-Use Development Area, and the Corridor Economic Development (Industrial) Area - should be considered the County's primary zones for new development in the future. These areas are well served by existing transportation infrastructure (Route 360), are near existing Courthouse area features such as shopping and schools, and are nearest to likely development pressure coming from Chesterfield County. By allowing a greater density of development in these key areas, Amelia can help to avoid unchecked rural area development, protecting the rural character and farming industry that are so important to its citizens.

The combination of these three areas should also be considered an "Urban Development Area" for the purposes of state law and transportation funding. An urban development area is defined as an area planned for reasonably compact new development. Importantly, designated urban development areas are given priority when it comes to some state funding opportunities, including for transportation projects under Virginia's SmartScale program.

Development Area Public Services

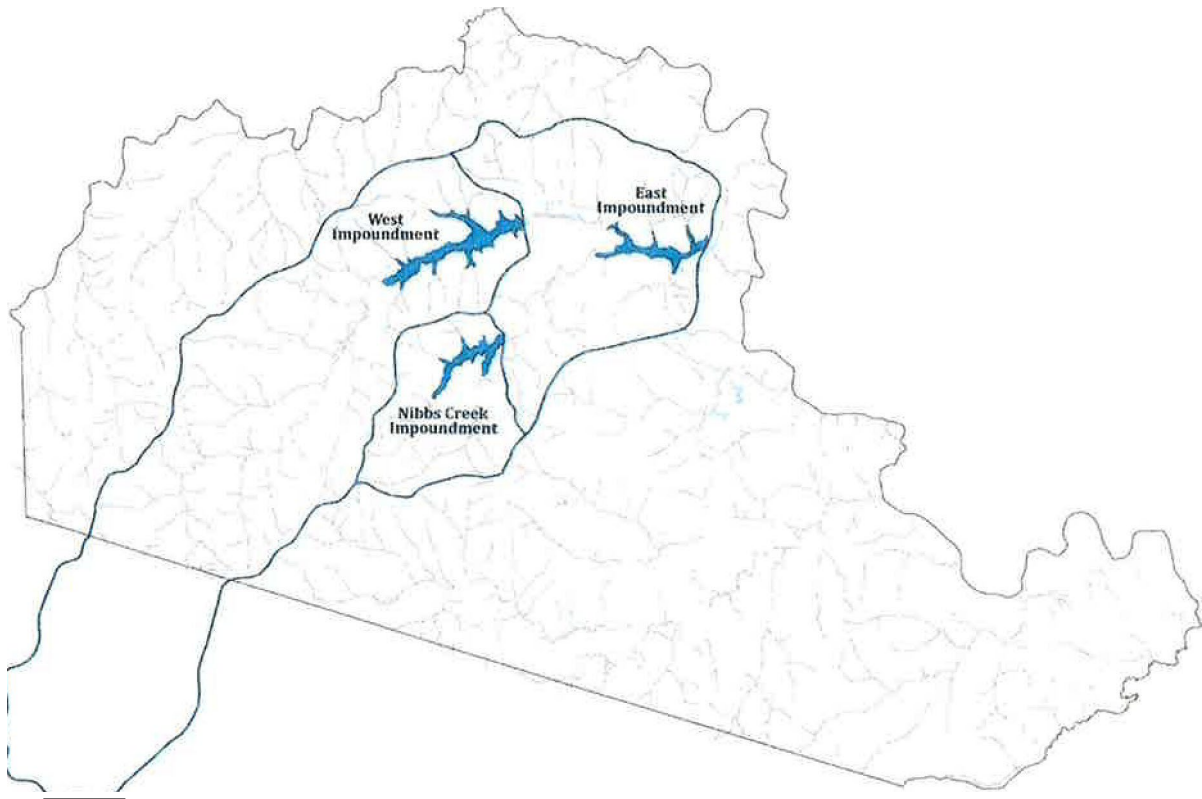
To absorb future growth while preserving Amelia County's rural heritage and agricultural economy, new development should largely be concentrated in the designated Development Areas. However, to fully accomplish the above development area goals, future residential and commercial uses in the Route 360 East Development Area should be served by public water and sewer utilities, allowing for small lot sizes and overall greater development density.

While existing public utilities in the Amelia Courthouse area, based on several groundwater wells and a small sewer plant located northwest of the Courthouse, serve the existing village capably, the County should plan early for the expansion and improvement of utility systems in this area.

Potential Water Service Expansions

While existing development in the Courthouse area is well served with public water via a series of groundwater wells, the future development of Amelia County, particularly in the area of Route 360 east of the Courthouse will eventually require a greater level of public services than these wells can supply. With ample rural lands in several watersheds, Amelia County has excellent potential to develop surface water sources that can supply a variety of future development scenarios, or even serve as a source of revenue by exporting water to neighboring communities. While these are long-term solutions to future development needs, the legal, engineering, and environmental hurdles to new surface water impoundments are high. The County should begin to pursue water supply planning as soon as possible with the knowledge that securing adequate future water supply will take many years.

The Comprehensive Plan process has identified three potential scenarios for future surface water impoundment and supply in the County. Both the East and West basin options could be capable of serving the Courthouse village and nearby development areas as the County grows in the future, while the Nibbs Creek option is a more modest proposal that could still supply ample new development in the Courthouse area. At this early stage of planning for future development and public service needs, all of these options should be considered viable, with further study planned to determine the most suitable location for reasons of cost, environment, or political reality.



West Basin Option:

Flat Creek West of Ladore Road

Contributing Drainage Area: 57,827 acres

Impoundment Surface Area: 547 acre

East Basin Option:

Flat Creek West of Chula Road

Contributing Drainage Area: 89,482 acres

Impoundment Surface Area: 1,041 acre

Nibbs Creek Basin Option:

Nibbs Creek West of Pridesville Road

Contributing Drainage Area: 9,735 acres

Impoundment Surface Area: 450 acre

Potential Sewer Expansions

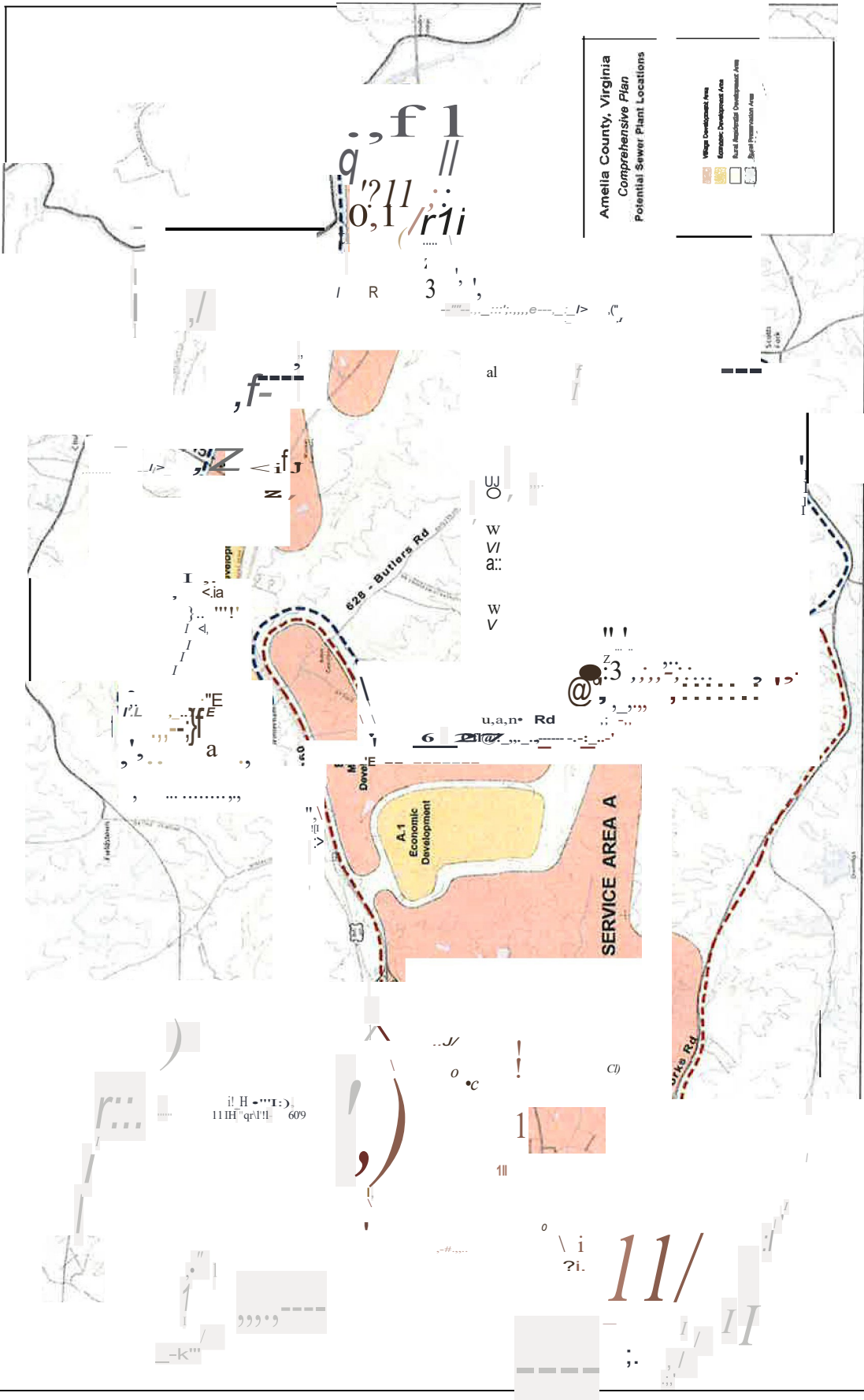
The County currently provides public sewer service to a limited area of Amelia Courthouse. This area is served by a sewer plant north of Route 360, near Pridesville Road. However, this location can serve only a limited area around the Courthouse, and cannot reach other proposed development areas along the Route 360 East corridor. In order to serve these development areas, and to improve the capacity of public sewer in the Courthouse area, one new sewer plant location should be investigated and incorporated into the County's fiscal planning. For the purposes of this plan, two Development Area sewer scenarios have been preliminarily evaluated; **Service Area A** and **Service Area A+B**. Each opens up new areas of the corridor for compact new development, while also improving sewer service for existing homes and businesses in the Courthouse vicinity.

Service Area A covers a total of 4,811 acres by locating a new sewer plant east of the Courthouse along Smacks Creek at Cheathams Road.

<u>Sewer Service Area A:</u> Cheathams Road Sewer Plant Location		
Planning Area	Acres Served	%ofCounty
Amelia Courthouse	3,349	1.5%
Corridor Crossroads Mixed-Use	710	0.3%
Corridor Economic Development	752	0.3%
Total Sewer Service Area	4,811	2.1%

By locating a new sewer plant farther east of the Courthouse, the County can open up even more potential development area. In this case, a scenario using a sewer plant along Smacks Creek near Military Road was used. This plant would have the ability to serve all of the Plant A service area, as well as additional acreage farther east along Route 360. This addition would increase the total service area to 5,962 acres.

<u>Sewer Service Area A+B:</u> Military Road Sewer Plant Location		
Planning Area	Acres Served	%of County
Amelia Courthouse	3,349	1.5%
Corridor Crossroads Mixed-Use	1,750	0.8%
Corridor Economic Development	863	0.4%
Total Sewer Service Area	5,962	2.7%





DEVELOPMENT AREA LAND HOLDING CAPACITY

The following exhibit examines the hypothetical capacity of the two Future Land Use Plan options. Residential and non-residential uses are allocated to available land within each of the potential future sewer utilities. Assuming relatively conservative densities for the various development areas, the capacity of **Option A** is estimated to accommodate 4,670 dwellings at full build-out. **Option A + B** could absorb approximately 6,490 dwellings.

Assuming the implementation of more effective rural area development policies, the planned land holding capacity of the 224,000 acres of Rural Residential and Rural/Agricultural planning areas is roughly 6,160 units. This figure is based on a policy that yields densities of, on average, 1 dwelling per 5 gross acres in the Rural Residential areas and 1 dwelling per 10 gross acres in the Rural/Agricultural areas. While this is still a relatively large residential unit count, it represents roughly 25% to 50% of the potential rural area growth under current County policies.

Development Services Areas – Development Potential Future Land Use Plan – Service Area Options Amelia County Comprehensive Plan			
Future Land Use Plan Development Area & Scenario	Amelia Courthouse Development Area	360 Corridor Development Area	Total Development Potential
Service Area A Option			
SF Detached	1,350 units	units	1,350 units
SF Mixed	1,998 units	838 units	2,836 units
Elderly/Condos	444 units	units	444 units
Commercial	412,260 sq.ft.	1,459,206 sq.ft.	1,871,466 sq.ft.
Enterprise	1,649,040 sq.ft.	4,226,972 sq.ft.	5,876,012 sq.ft.
Service Area A+B Option			
SF Detached	1,350 units	units	1,350 units
SF Mixed	1,998 units	2,658 units	4,656 units
Elderly/Condos	444 units	units	444 units
Commercial	412,260 sq.ft.	2,365,308 sq.ft.	2,777,568 sq.ft.
Enterprise	1,649,040 sq.ft.	5,163,602 sq.ft.	6,812,642 sq.ft.

THE FUTURE LAND USE PLAN

By responding to both present-day reality and the County's vision for the future, the essential challenge for the **Future Land Use Plan** can be simplistically reduced to a supply/demand formula:

- (1) **Ascribe to a realistic land use vision**
- (2) **Anticipate future growth demands**
- (3) **Manage the supply of county services in a responsible way**

From a demand perspective, it must: (1) project both near-term and long-term demographic growth, and (2) project the level and character of housing and employment growth. This has yielded an estimate for the amount of land necessary to respond to a range of growth scenarios. With demand comes the responsibility of government to designate the appropriate geographical areas to accommodate this growth. It must also consider its responsibility to supply essential future services, infrastructure and facilities. But, from a supply perspective, the challenge becomes more difficult. Inasmuch as demand projections are imprecise, the County must consider a range of possible alternatives. And, subsequently, it must adopt a plan that is in the best interests of the County's culture, resources, citizens, and its future residents and employment base.

The Comprehensive Plan's preferred **Future Land Use Plan** embraces the **Service Area A & B** concept. Of the options considered during the development of the plan, it is deemed the most comprehensive and flexible approach to serving the potential growth demands that the County will likely face *over* the next twenty to thirty years. It responds to the reality that the rural and agricultural areas cannot continue to absorb expansive levels of future growth while sustaining the farming industry. The recommended service areas must be implemented to balance growth demands. Otherwise, Amelia's rural culture, farm industry and sensitive environmental resources, including ground water, will be harmed. Prior to the end of the current decade, the County will have to pursue a long-range plan for water and sewer as well as options to provide for the responsible and cost effective supply of education, emergency services, public facilities, recreation, and other community services.

The table below provides a summary of the build-out potential of the Future Land Use Plan. The estimated residential growth is balanced between the development service areas and the County's rural farmland and open spaces. In seeking to respond to future growth pressures with regulations that are politically feasible, the most difficult compromise was that of assigning the land use density in the County's rural areas. The following table acknowledges that rural area growth will still occur, and plans for it at an *average* density of 10 units per acre. Future growth within the Rural Residential area is planned at an average of 5 units per acre (although minimum lot size is 3 acres, some larger lots will be developed, as will roads and other open spaces). Within the development services areas, the goal was to recognize that, to be economically feasible, mixed-use development requires urban services and infrastructure. Thus, the recommended land use densities parallel those in growing urbanizing communities throughout the state.

Potential Future Growth Capacity
 Future Land Use Plan
 2016 Comprehensive Plan



Development Service Area	Acres	Units	Sq. Ft.
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Development Service Areas

Amelia Courthouse	3,349 acres	3,792 units	2,061,300 sq.ft
360 Corridor Development Areas	2,613 acres	2,658 units	7,528,910 sq.ft
Total Development Service Areas	5,962 acres	6,450 units	9,590,210 sq.ft

Rural Areas (No Public Utilities)

Rural Residential Community	15,716 acres	943 units	
Rural & Agricultural Presevation	208,662 acres	5,217 units	
Jetersville Rural Village	611 acres	40 units	311,454 sq.ft
Total Rural Areas	224,989 acres	6,200 units	311,454 sq.ft

Total Potential Growth Capacity	230,951 acres	12,650 units	9,901,664 sq.ft
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Achieving Balance: Growth Management and the Marketplace

The true test of the Future Land Use Plan is in whether it obtains a reasonable supply/demand balance between (1) the land area designated for the Development Areas and Rural Areas, and (2) the potential County growth expansion periods. The former is driven by the County's vision and goals for the future, while the latter is uniquely a function of regional marketplace dynamics.

The 2016 Plan examined growth three scenarios for the future, each with estimates of residential and employment growth:

- (1) Slow-to-moderate growth at 5% per decade;**
- (2) Medium-to-rapid growth at 12% per decade; and**
- (3) Explosive growth at 25% per decade.**

The first scenario is based on very conservative Virginia Employment Commission projections, with the second scenario established as a more realistic estimate given the historic, outwardly expanding growth patterns within the Richmond Metropolitan region. However, the latter "explosive" growth scenario cannot be discounted: Growth rates as high as 25% per decade have happened before, including in neighboring Chesterfield and Powhatan Counties.

Detailed demographic and land capacity analysis has explored the impacts of distribution of residential and employment growth under varying assumptions as to where and when this takes place. As summarized on the previous exhibit, the Future Land Use Plan targets an approximate 50/50 split in the designation of residential growth between the Development Areas and Rural & Preservation Areas. The combined Future Land Use Plan capacity is of the planning areas is 12,650 dwellings. In comparison, roughly 95% of the County residential growth is concentrated in the outlying areas.

"Does the Future land Use Plan allow for too much capacity for future development?" This is fair question to ask when the estimated residential development capacity of the Future Land Use Plan approaches 13,000 dwellings. The answer would be "yes" if current rural residential trends were to continue for another generation: the County's farmland would be decimated by rural subdivisions. The answer would also be "yes" if the County were to not pursue plans for the infrastructure support to serve the Development Areas. However, the answer is "no" if the County coordinates its future capital improvements to efficiently channel growth to the Development Areas. Being located within the expanding ring of the Richmond area, demand for homes in Amelia County will be a function of the demands attributable to the larger regional marketplace and being served by a new group of seasoned developers leading the way.

At present, most developers follow the path of least resistance by creating lots on farmland and open spaces. Little interest has been shown in undertaking Development Area projects, such as infill development within the Amelia Courthouse planning area. Today's builder trends will change with more sophisticated incoming consumer tastes. One need only look eastward to see how the real estate marketplace, without solid local planning policy, has affected neighboring Chesterfield County. Their planning vision and corresponding safeguards for the future were derailed by political fumbling and subsequently imposed only after it was too late. Without well planned and supported Development Areas for the coming generation of growth, the County is extremely vulnerable.

Effective land use planning policy works hand-in-glove with marketplace realities. If too much land is designated to accommodate residential growth, it will be impossible to provide effective public services and preserve natural resources. If too little, the marketplace functions erratically because natural growth cannot be stifled. For example, if between 2016 and 2036, Amelia experiences two successive decades of medium-to-rapid growth (1.2% annually), over one-quarter of the County's development capacity will be absorbed. This, in effect, produces a real estate supply/demand ratio of 4:1, known as the Fair Market Multiplier.

This 4:1 ratio is representative of what is commonly held to be a "healthy" and competitive real estate market. In other words, home buyers over this twenty-year period would, in theory, have a choice between four acres for every acre actually sold. If an additional twenty years of land absorption were to be "piggybacked" onto the 2016-2036 expansion period (at the same 12% decennial rate), over 50% of the County's theoretical development capacity would be absorbed. At that point, land development trends would likely be dictated by the external marketplace and not planning policy.

The table below examines the County's potential residential absorption impacts for each of the three 2016- 2036 growth scenarios:



¹ "% of Capacity Absorbed" represents the percentage of the land area, both rural and development areas, that is designated by the Future Land Use Plan for residential growth.

RURAL AREA FUTURE LAND USE

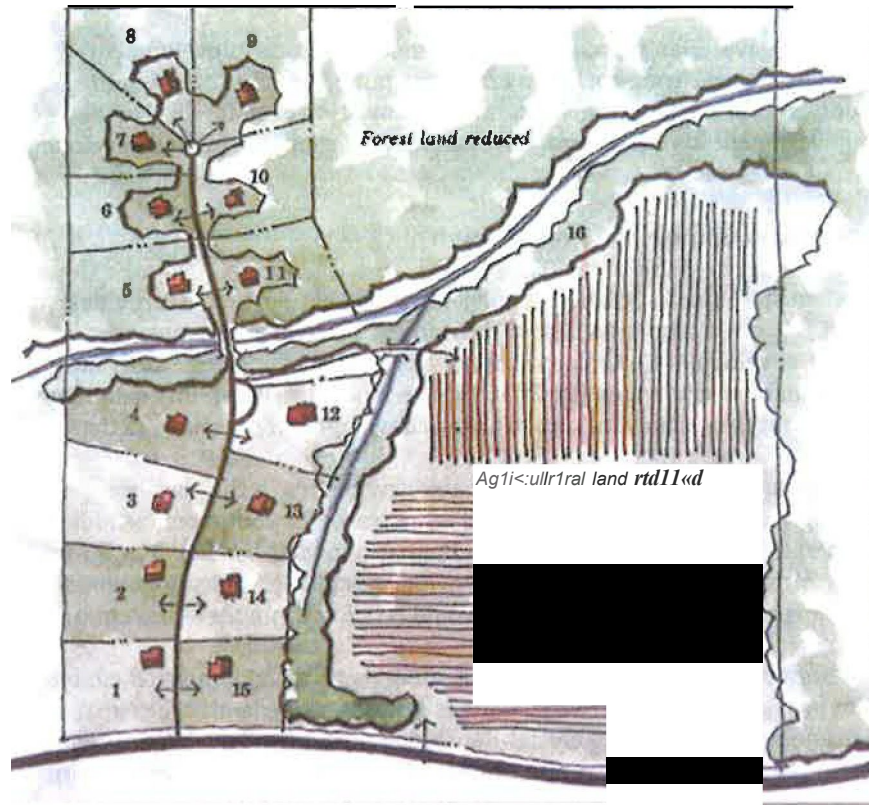
This Comprehensive Plan's focus on accommodating new development in compact patterns in key development areas near transportation and other public services can help to alleviate development pressure on the County's rural areas and agricultural economy. However, it will also take a concerted effort on the part of County government to reduce rural development in order to bring the development area vision to reality.

Cluster Subdivisions and Farm Preservation

The County must refine its growth management system so that it provides realistic incentives for farm preservation. It must also establish disincentives to reduce the turnover of existing active agricultural properties for development into conventional large-lot subdivisions. With the potential for over 6,000 new rural area residential units (per the 2016 Future Land Use Plan), this should entail using less, rather than more, of the County's agricultural land to absorb development pressures in the years to come.

The County's goal should not be to prevent any new homes in the rural area, but to encourage subdivisions that respect agricultural lands, and preserve large tracts for continued farming, forestry or open space. One way to accomplish this is through cluster zoning; allowing smaller lots on one portion of a property in exchange for preserving some of the property for agriculture. Density bonuses can be offered to incentivize clustering, allowing slightly more lots than would be allowed under a conventional subdivision.

In order to protect rural areas from large-lot subdivision development, cluster zoning regulations should be upgraded to provide more attractive incentives for preserving land. The existing approach for bonus density is not doing enough to incentivize cluster development. Conversely, bonuses should be earned based on clear criteria related to the quality, character, and location of the proposed development.



A Cluster Development Example:

Parcel size: 135 acres

Conventional development: 13 lots (10 acres each)

Cluster development with bonuses: 15 lots (2.5 acres each)

98 acres (70%) remains for farming

The County should revise its cluster regulations and consider incorporating the following:

- "Earned" Cluster Bonuses: The first step is to make cluster development an attractive option by increasing bonus density opportunities. This will require first establishing a baseline density (as opposed to minimum lot size) for each of the rural, agricultural and conservation zoning districts. For cluster lots, the ordinance should establish both a maximum and minimum lot size requirement. This would allow for the County to employ state-enabled provisions to review and approval cluster developments via special permit or rezoning applications.
- Pathway to Obtaining Bonuses: Bonuses should be earned. Revise the current cluster ordinance to allow Staff and Commission discretion on application of bonuses, employing contemporary "density by design" principles along with a thorough plan review process.
- Open Space: Increase both the quantity and quality of mandatory and permanent open space parcels. Ensure that cluster plans are designed to optimally promote the continuation of active farm operations. One bonus dwelling on the open space parcel that would be limited to farm support use. Bonuses should be linked to a commitment by the owner to the Virginia Outdoors Foundation or other open space easement in perpetuity.

- Farm Use Preservation Commitment: Consider the approval of bonuses linked to continuation of farming or other productive agricultural operations via proffers or other conditional use techniques.
- Design Qualifications for Cluster Bonuses: This would include a range of common-sense design principles upon which the Staff and Commission would require a cluster application; including, but not limited to: (a) improved vegetative buffers along streams and floodplains, (b) plans that locate lots out of direct views from existing roads, (c) provision of recreational space that is proportional to community needs, (d) creation of a landscape buffer along existing VDOT road frontage and coordinated street landscaping along new internal streets.
- Cluster Subdivision Access: Regulations should limit the number of subdivision street access points to existing VDOT roads. Such limitations should be based on engineering principles.
- Environmental Systems: Given the environmental characteristics of the property, bonuses could be tied to implementation of community well systems w/private maintenance agreements as well as engineered drain fields w/private maintenance agreements. Other environmental measures could include upgraded stormwater management or erosion and sediment control features.
- Conventional Lot and Frontage Limitations: Without disincentives based on substantially increased conventional lot sizes, counter balanced cluster incentives will not be as clear-cut. One approach would be to not approve subdivisions with conventional lots. Also, where divisions are permitted, the minimum rural area conventional lot frontage should be increased up to 600'.
- A new "Rural Cluster" zoning district could be created to establish (1) a low baseline density and (2) a higher minimum lot size for any conventional lot regardless of subdivision pathway, Revisions to the cluster ordinance would establish a sliding scale of bonuses to achieve a development illustrative of the options depicted below:

VI. Transportation

Chapter VI: **Transportation**

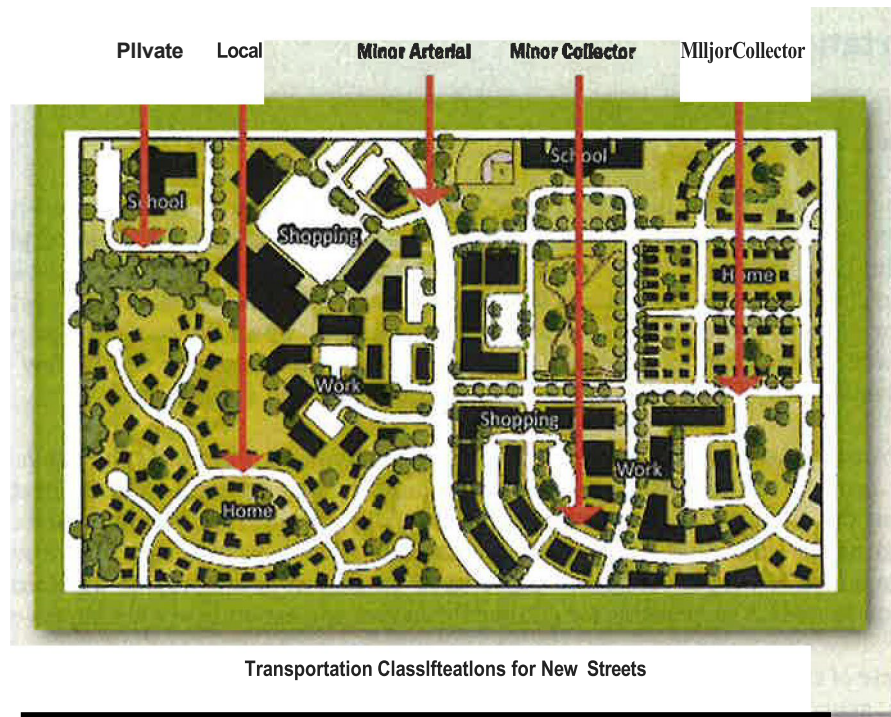


Introduction

As Amelia County grows in the future, whether that growth is sudden or slow and steady over many years, transportation to and from homes, businesses, shops, and points of interest must be provided safely and efficiently. This Comprehensive Plan recommends that future County development take place largely in those areas near Amelia Courthouse and points east along Route 360. The availability of existing transportation facilities is one of many facets to this land use recommendation. Given the complex nature of transportation projects, as well as the costs of road building, future road improvements will be few in Amelia County, whether implemented by public authorities or by private sector land developers.

When future road improvements do occur, they may be implemented by either the public or private sectors. Public sector projects are initiated when traffic conditions, such as roadway deterioration, congestion or safety, warrant the need, and as funding becomes available. A shortage of public funds to meet all future transportation needs should be anticipated. On the other hand, private sector improvements should be provided in conjunction with development based upon the impact of the project. The local planning, zoning, and subdivision process is responsible for guiding the nature and extent of private improvements.

With the update of the Comprehensive Plan, the transportation plan responds to future access and circulation requirements generated by anticipated growth. For transportation planning purposes, the land use projections incorporated into the Future Land Use Plan were employed. Growth projections the 2016-2036 period and a County build-out condition were considered in development of the plan. The Future Land Use Plan does not anticipate build-out during the lifecycle of this Comprehensive Plan, nor can it be predicted with any level of certainty. However, evaluation of a build-out scenario will give Amelia the best look at its long-term transportation and growth future.



County Roads

The Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) classifies roads and streets into several categories according to the character of service they are intended to provide, some carrying through traffic at high volume and speed, and others providing low speed access to properties. Traffic volumes and trip type (local or regional) are used to establish classification, and thus establish proper design parameters for the facility. The right of way necessary to accommodate the lanes of pavement for each road classification is established for new roads. For existing roads and streets, additional right of way width for each classification may be needed for utility relocations, environmental mitigation, grade changes, turn lanes, intersection improvements, transit, and bicycle and pedestrian facilities.

The functional classification of Amelia County's roads and streets is divided into five basic categories, identified as:

1. **Principal (Major) Arterials**
2. **Minor Arterials**
3. **Major Collectors**
4. **Minor Collectors**
5. **Local (State) Roads and Streets**

The map on the following page illustrates the County's road system as currently designated along with 2015 average daily traffic volumes as recorded by the Virginia Department of Transportation.

1. Principal Arterials

Route 360 is the County's most important principal (also referred to as major) arterial. In theory, its function is to provide mostly through movement of statewide and regional traffic. In practice, it does many jobs, serving long-distance routes across state, commuting routes to Richmond and Farmville, or

short local trips for Amelia residents.

Route 360 currently carries 17,000 vehicles per day (VPD) at the east county line and 6,000 VPD at the south/west county line where some traffic splits off onto Route 307 (also a principal arterial). Relative to Route 360 traffic in Chesterfield County, Amelia's segment of the corridor provides excellent capacity and service levels, and will continue to be the County's major route as growth and development find their way to Amelia.

2. Minor Arterials

Minor arterial serve to distribute traffic between lower classification roads and Principal Arterials. These routes serve trips of moderate length, serve geographic areas that are smaller than their Principal Arterial counterparts and offer connectivity to the higher Arterial system.

While they have relatively low traffic volumes and relatively narrow rural designs, Five Forks Road and Military Road are assigned Minor Arterial designations because they make important cross-county connections. Goode's Bridge Road is also a Minor Arterial, serving as Amelia Courthouse's Main Street and connecting the village to Route 360. While these roads carry relatively minor traffic burdens, these routes make connections that are essential to the flow of traffic around the County.

3. Collectors

Collectors serve a critical role in the roadway network by gathering traffic from Local Roads and funneling them to the Arterial network. While Collectors are broken down into two categories: Major Collectors and Minor Collectors, the differences between the two are very subtle.

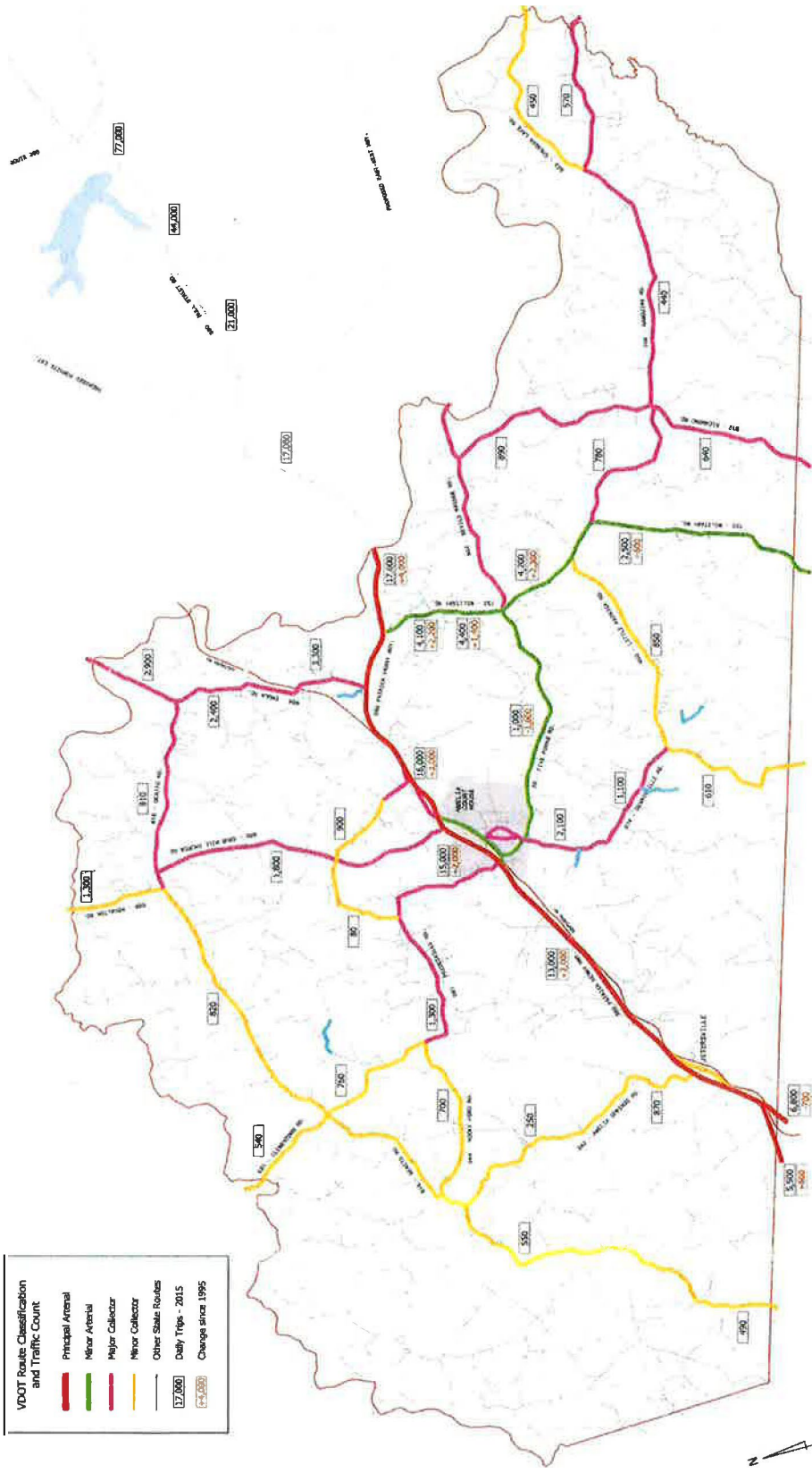
Even Amelia's Major Collectors currently carry only limited traffic volumes. The volume on Dennisville Road, for example, was only 2,100 in 2015. Chula Road carried somewhat higher volumes, 3,300 VPD, while also serving minor levels of inter-county traffic. None of the traffic on the County's remaining Major Collectors exceeded two thousand trips per day. While carrying well under one thousand vehicles per day, Genito Road, west of Royalton Road is classified as a minor collector. Similarly, Amelia Springs Road, Clementown Road, and Little Patrick Road carry 870, 540, 850 vehicles per day respectively. The County's Collectors have geometric characteristics that will limit their ultimate carrying capacity and function if the rural and agricultural areas of the County fully develop to their current zoned densities.

4. Local Roads and Streets

Local Roads and Streets comprise the largest percentage of Amelia's roadways in terms of mileage. In practice, Local Roads and Streets are not intended for use in long distance travel. In rural areas, local roads serve primarily to provide direct access to adjacent land and within existing and new subdivisions. Local Roads provide service limited to travel over relatively short distance as compared to collectors or other higher systems. All facilities not classified on one of the higher systems in rural areas in the County are classified as Local Roads.

Historically, desirable alignments for new local roads are not identified on the State's Thoroughfare Plan, leaving the planning of such roads local government. As the County seeks to implement its Development Service Areas for the purpose of new County growth, there is a priority on developing new local roads to serve the designated areas. Conversely, the County will need to take steps to protect country roads given their design and right of way shortcomings to absorb currently zoned residential densities.

Amelia County, Virginia
 Draft Comprehensive Plan
 Transportation Map

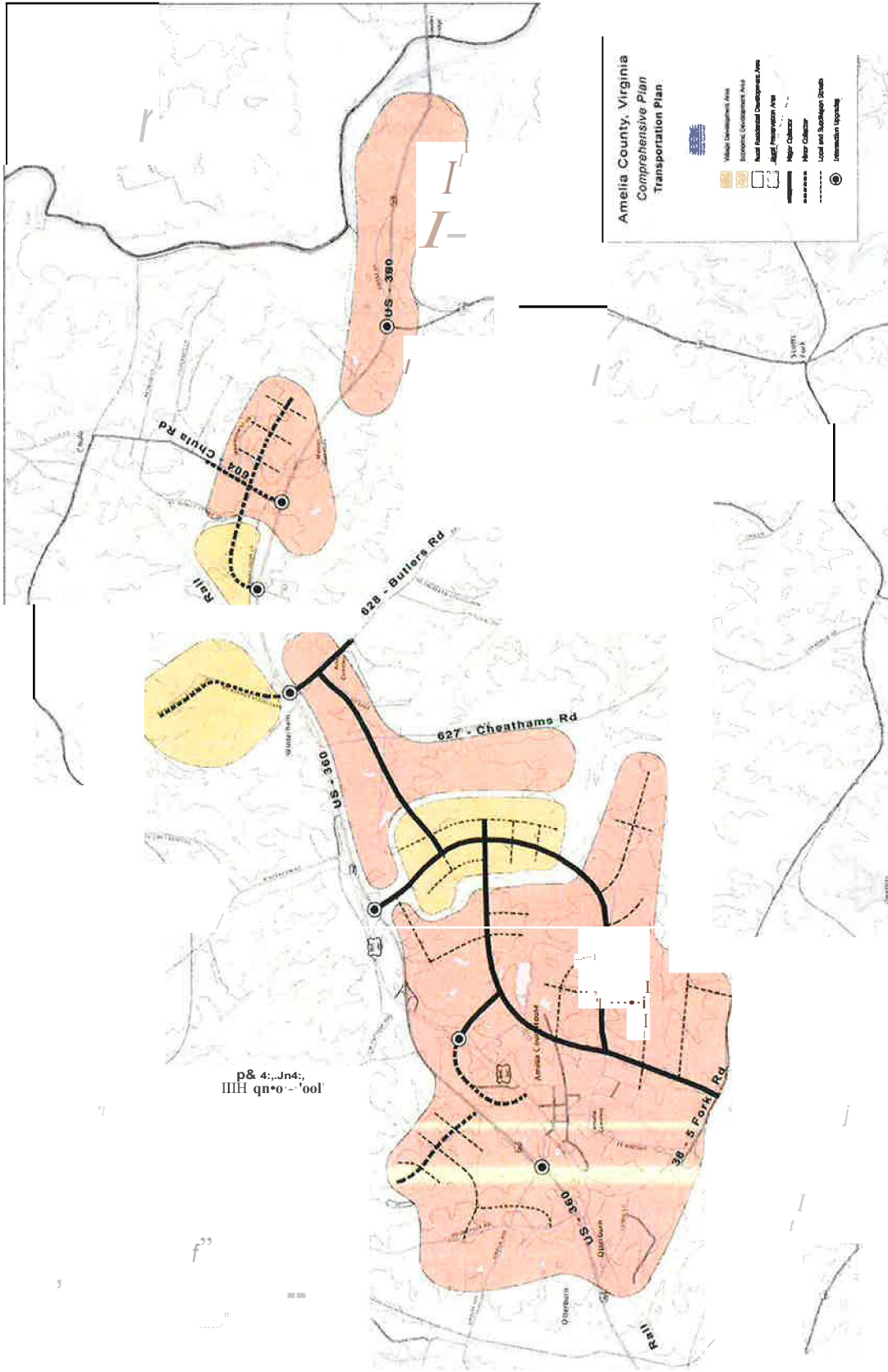


A Plan for the Future

Conceptual traffic modeling reveals that the County's rural road system cannot accommodate high levels of residential growth in outlying areas. If anticipated future growth occurs predominately in the agricultural and rural areas, the capacity and safety of the road system will be compromised along with the continued deterioration of the County's agricultural industry. In response, this Comprehensive Plan recognizes four principles for future transportation planning in Amelia:

- (1) growth should be channeled to Amelia's Development Service Areas to relief pressure on the outlying areas,*
- (2) adequate public infrastructure and facilities (schools, water sewer, roads) will be required to accommodate growth,*
- (3) the capacity and function of Route 360 must be protected from uncoordinated development, and*
- (4) the County should act now to reserve the proper alignments for future interconnectivity in the Development Service Areas.*

The diagrams on the following pages provide a recommended transportation plan within the Development Service Areas, as well as a schematic diagram of streets recommended for the Development Service Areas. An alignment for new major and minor collectors is depicted along with recommendations for upgrading existing designated collector roads. Subsequent sections of this report address how these alignments can be preserved and implemented.

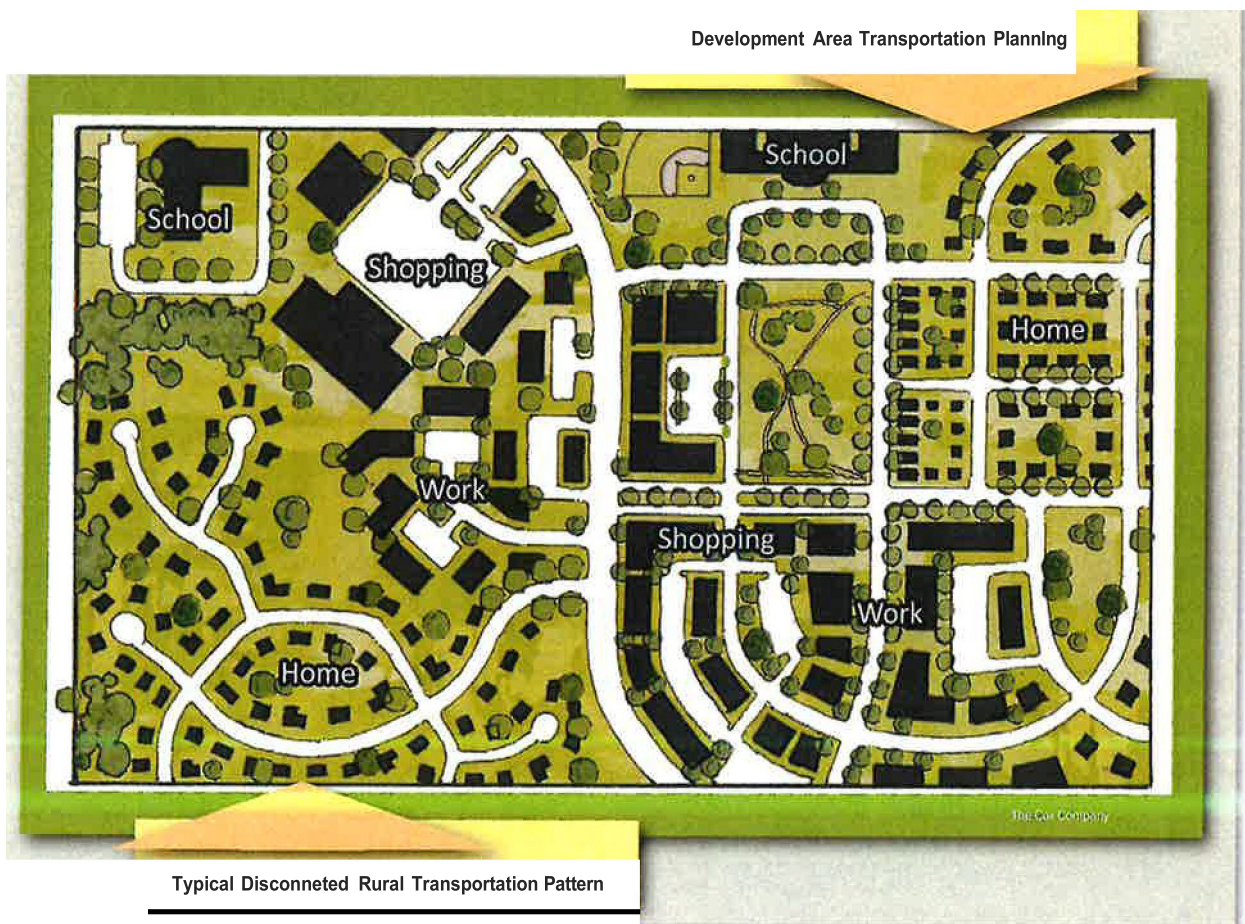


**Smart Transportation Planning:
Development Service Areas vs. Rural/Ag Area Development**

A well conceived transportation plan should respond to the land uses and densities adopted for the Future Land Use Plan. The plan should create a coordinated network that (1) limits the adverse traffic and land use impacts on the County's rural road system, and (2) reduces access demands from future development on Route 360 and existing secondary roads. These two goals are not mutually exclusive.

The major transportation objective for the Courthouse Village and other Development Service Areas should be to advance the alignment for an appropriately scaled, interconnected road system. A well planned system would reduce traffic originating within the Development Service Areas as well as promote the absorption and diversion of pass-by traffic that otherwise adversely impacts the Rt. 360 corridor and other minor collectors. Capacity preservation is the key for the rural and agricultural areas. Measures should be employed to offset the adverse traffic impacts created by the conventional status quo approach to rural residential lot development that has dominated development trends over the past 50 years.

Development Area vs. Rural Area Transportation Planning



Traffic Projections

It is helpful for comparative purposes to evaluate the traffic volumes that could be generated by future development in Amelia County. The goal of this analysis is to demonstrate that properly located, concentrated, mixed-use development will result in lower traffic impacts on the County's existing road network. General studies of mixed use development have suggested that traffic can be reduced by as much as 40% by locating residential, employment, and other commercial uses together in compact arrangements, meaning that future residents of Amelia's development areas might be able to work and shop without commuting at all, only making short trips that don't impact outlying roads. This effect is known as internal capture. While this sort of development would add trips to Route 360, this route is built for substantial traffic and has a great deal of capacity available. A study of Brandermil\ in nearby Chesterfield County showed similar numbers, with an average of 35% of all trips internally captured and never leaving the small study area.

This plan has used simple traffic projections to project future traffic volumes based on the anticipated land uses contained in the Future Land Use Plan. The technique compares the traffic volumes that would be generated by (1) conventional forms of development spread throughout the County, and (2) the same amount of growth located in the Future Land Use Plan's mixed use development areas near the Courthouse and Route 360 east.

The simple traffic projection method was used to evaluate potential County growth between 2016 and 2036. During this period, even modest growth of 4.9% per decade could add nearly 17,000 vehicles to county roads if development is spread throughout the County. Over the same period of time, concentrated growth near Ameha Courthouse and along Route 360 East would likely add less than 11,000 vehicles to County roads, and would add these vehicles in areas best suited to handle the traffic. The following table shows similar results when this traffic projection is extended to higher rates of potential growth as well.

Projected Traffic Generation: 2016 - 2036		
Concentrated Growth vs. Rural Growth		
	<i>Average Daily Trips (ADT)</i>	
	Rural Area Growth Model	Concentrated Growth Model
Population and Employment Growth: 4.9% per Decade	16,906	10,693
Population and Employment Growth: 12% per Decade	36,479	22,485
Population and Employment Growth: 25% per Decade	62,922	37,257

After the Plan: Adopting an Official Map

In order to channel future growth towards the designated Development Service Areas, the County must ensure the provision of adequate public infrastructure, including water, sewer, and roads. With respect to roads, the essential requirement will be that new development streets are connected to each other, rather than a series of dead-end streets connected directly to Route 360. If the County is to achieve such an interconnected system, it should begin to establish preferred alignments for future streets and implement policies and plans to ensure future development of these streets.

Given the current funding demands placed on VDOT, the majority of new County roads and streets will likely be initiated, funded, and constructed by the private sector as a part of future real estate development projects. The County should take necessary steps well in advance of future growth to be certain that interconnected streets are provided by such developments.

While this Comprehensive Plan provides a map of conceptual transportation connections for the future development areas, there is another tool that can allow the County greater control over the provision of streets in future developments; an Official Map. The provisions and guidelines for the Official Map are contained in Section 15.2-2233 of the Code of Virginia.

The Official Map goes one step farther the conceptual connections shown in this section. The County can undertake a more serious engineering look at these potential roads and adopt realistic alignments on an Official Map. These alignments must then be respected by future developers as they go about their own plans.

Under the Code of Virginia, the Official Transportation Map is the only formal mechanism by which the alignment for proposed roads and infrastructure is established in advance by local government, allowing for the proposed rights-of-way to be reserved for future public acquisition or proffered dedication. The Official Map process benefits both the private and the public sector in that landowners can proceed with development plans with the full knowledge and precision of where transportation improvements are to be located.

Planning Process for County Transportation Improvements

The Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) is a governor-appointed 17-member body that establishes administrative policies for Virginia's transportation systems and allocates funding for highway projects, airports, seaports and public transportation. CTB-approved programs are administered through the various transportation-related state agencies, including the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT).

The Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) is responsible for the maintenance and operation of all public roads in the County. The County works closely with VDOT to identify priority transportation projects through the Six-Year Improvement Program.

The County should continue an annual practice of reviewing VDOT project plans for the Six-Year Improvement Program. This will be extremely important as the County embraces a policy of channeling future growth into its Development Service planning areas. This will demand coordinated leadership, planning, and attention to proper street alignments, interconnectivity between adjacent parcels, adequate rights of way, and funding commitments by developers in conjunction with individual projects. In those instances where new roads are designed and constructed by the private sector, the County and the State share the responsibility to ensure that these facilities meet standards that allow their acceptance into the State system for maintenance and operation.

Funding of County Transportation Improvements

The VDOT Six-Year Improvement Program

Each year the Commonwealth Transportation Board updates the Six-Year Improvement Program that distributes funds for interstate, primary and secondary road projects, as well as other transportation modes. Secondary road funds represent almost one-third of the State's overall construction funds available each year. Each county receives its share of secondary road funds determined by a formula based on local population and land area, while funds for unpaved roads are allocated to the County based on its share of the total unpaved miles eligible for funding in the state. From a statewide perspective, this program is very competitive. Amelia must compete with more populous Richmond area jurisdictions. This likely means that Amelia's existing rural road system will see only incremental benefits over the coming years rather than major projects that will add system capacity. This makes concentrating growth towards areas that are well served by the existing transportation system vitally important.

The Six Year Improvement Program provides opportunities for public input, and many of the secondary road projects originate through the requests of citizens. Six Year Improvement Program projects for Amelia County are listed below for fiscal year 2017. Please note that this list is updated annually. For the most current list of Six Year Improvement Program projects, contact the County Administration Offices.

VDOT Six Year Improvement Program Projects for Amelia County- FY 2017

Project Description	Cost Estimate
Amelia Courthouse - Sidewalks, Parking, Streetlights, Bike Racks	\$123,000
Rte 360 - replace bridges	\$13,252,000
Rte 620 - bridge replacement	\$2,526,000
Rte 646 - surface treat unpaved road	\$341,000
Rural addition (Archers Creek Ln.)	\$100,000
Rte 660 - rural rustic	\$95,000
Rte 666 - rural rustic	\$107,000
Rte 667 - surface treat non-hardsurfaced road	\$145,000
Rte 680 - rural rustic	\$53,000
Rte 683 - rural rustic	\$79,000
Rte 684 - surface treat non-hardsurfaced road	\$108,000
Rte 688 - surface treat non-hardsurfaced road	\$89,000
Rte 689 - rural rustic	\$14,000
Rte 691 - surface treat non-hardsurface road	\$103,000
Rte 692 - surface treat non-hardsurfaced road	\$96,000
Rte 695 - rural rustic	\$40,000
Rte 704 - rural rustic	\$10,000
Rte 710 - rural rustic	\$22,000
Rte 714 - surface treat non-hardsurfaced road	\$75,000
Rte 715 - surface treat non-hardsurfaced road	\$75,000
Rte 717 - rural rustic	\$30,000
Rte 723 - surface treat non-hardsurfaced road	\$26,000
Rte 735 - surface treat non-hardsurfaced road	\$85,000

State Revenue-Sharing Program

The purpose of Virginia's Revenue Sharing Program is to provide additional funding for use by a county, city, or town to construct, maintain, or improve the highway systems within such county, city, or town, and for eligible road additions in certain counties of the Commonwealth. Locality funds are matched with State funds with statutory limitations on the amount of state funds authorized per locality. The program is administered by VDOT in cooperation with participating localities under the authority of Section 33.1-23.05 of the Code of Virginia. An annual allocation of funds for this program is designated by the Commonwealth Transportation Board. Applications for program funding must be made by resolution of the governing body of the jurisdiction in which the road is located. Construction may be accomplished by VDOT or by the locality under agreement by VDOT, although locally administered projects receive a higher priority under this program.

Revenue sharing allows the County to leverage its local funding by matching one local dollar for one revenue-sharing dollar, thereby doubling available resources for participating projects. This is the County's most flexible public funding source, since it may be used in conjunction with the Primary or Secondary Road Improvement Programs or proffer funds. However, revenue sharing is a modest funding source limited to approximately one million dollars annually.

State Smart Scale Program

The Smart Scale program is Virginia's newest method of assigning transportation project funding. Just beginning to operate at the time of this writing, Smart Scale is designed to prioritize the funding of projects to create the greatest benefit with limited funding. Funding comes from two main legs of the program, the District Grants Program and the High-Priority Projects Program. The District Grants Program is open only to localities, who compete for funds against other projects from the same construction district. For Amelia, this means competing against Richmond, Chesterfield, Powhatan, and other Richmond District localities. Projects applying under the High-Priority Projects Program compete with projects from across the Commonwealth.

Smart Scale assesses projects based on a number of factors, including safety, accessibility, congestion mitigation, economy, and environment. The program also takes Urban Development Areas into account, including Amelia's development areas, which are designated as Urban Development Areas by this comprehensive plan. While the competitive nature of this program will likely mean less funding to rural localities such as Amelia, the County should consider applying for Smart Scale funding if an eligible local project is identified in the future.

State Recreational Access Funds

The Virginia Recreational Access Program helps to fund access to recreational areas or historic sites operated by the Commonwealth of Virginia or another public authority, and is available for road or bikeway projects. Recreational Access funding may not be used for the acquisition of rights of way or adjustments of utilities, and the governing body must state in its resolution that these items will be provided at no cost to the program. For an access road to a facility operated by a locality or authority, the maximum unmatched allocation is \$250,000. Up to an additional \$100,000 may be allocated if matched by the locality. A maximum of \$60,000 unmatched may be allocated for a bikeway, with an additional \$15,000 available if matched on a dollar-for-dollar by the locality.

Private Sector Funding and Proffers

Proffers are voluntary commitments made by a developer at the time that an application for a zoning amendment is approved. Proffers are enforceable agreements that run with the land, and are intended to offset the direct impacts of a proposed development. These agreements can be an important part of the County's funding of necessary improvements because they shift the burden of paying for utilities, roads, and other improvements directly to the new developments that make these improvements necessary.

The County might also consider future proposals for a Community Development Authority or Special Tax District. Both of these options provide a way to raise funds in a way that impacts only a small area of the County. This kind of funding requires not only the action of the Board of Supervisors, but also the approval of a majority of the affected land owners. While such proposals are unusual, they may be appropriate for the designated development areas, where compact new development will have a unique impact on County roads, schools, and other facilities.

VII. Implementation



Chapter VII: **Implementation**

Introduction

This chapter addresses the initiatives and measures needed for the effective implementation of the 2016 Comprehensive Plan. During the process of defining the vision and identifying the values that Amelia's citizens place on County's planning for the future, three major themes were identified:

- 1. Concentration of residential and business growth in the development areas;**
- 2. Commitment to providing adequate municipal water and sewer services, *and***
- 3. Decreasing the pace of residential development in the rural areas.**

Implementation will require an integrated set of initiatives by the Board of Supervisors. For the designated Development Areas, with an emphasis on the Amelia Courthouse planning area, these would include:

- Small area plans for the individual Development Areas
- Complementary infrastructure plans for the Development Areas
- Enhancements to facilitate forms of higher density in the zoning ordinance and subdivision ordinance
- Land acquisition for water and sewer improvements
- Detailed transportation plans in the Development Areas and securing the reservation of rights-of-way within individual developments
- Advanced corridor access and intersection planning for Route 360

In the rural and agricultural areas, pro-active County attention would be given to: (1) continued support of family subdivisions; (2) incentives to continue family farming operations; (3) preserving long-term economic value for active agricultural properties; (4) preserving the remaining transportation capacity on country roads; (5) limiting strip development in the outlying areas; (6) improving cluster subdivision regulations and review guidelines for rural subdivisions; and (7) continued enhancements to zoning policy and proffers to counter the impact of rural subdivisions on County schools, capital infrastructure, and public services. The most critical Comprehensive Plan implementation recommendations are summarized in the following section.

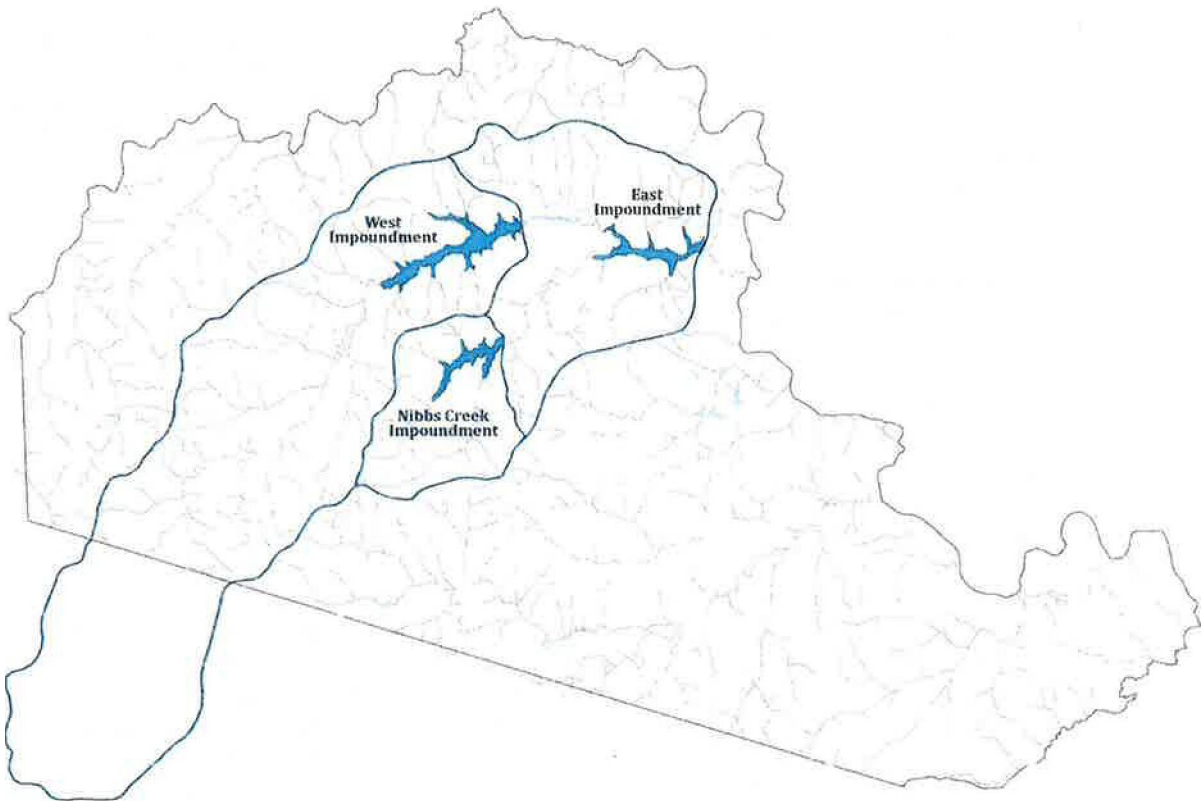


Without a strong commitment to key implementation recommendations, the goals of the Comprehensive Plan and the vision for Amelia that it represents will not be successful.

Plan Implementation Recommendations

1. **Amelia Courthouse Area Plan:** A small area plan (detailed Urban Development Area master plan) for the Courthouse development area should be prepared to establish a realistic allocation of town-scaled resources and land use opportunities, focusing on infill development and repurposing of underutilized structures and properties. Initial efforts should include (a) preparing an inventory of potential infill opportunities within the town center, (b) evaluating long-term infrastructure requirements, and (c) establishing an internal transportation plan that will adequately serve the village and provide better access to the village from Route 360.
2. **Rural and Agricultural Areas:** The Rural Preservation Area and the Agricultural Preservation Area into should be consolidated into a single planning area that emphasizes appropriate open space objectives, rural area density and non-agricultural use configurations. Zoning regulations should follow suit. The average allowable density in related zoning districts in the rural areas should be reduced to not more than one dwelling unit per ten (10) acres. Conversely, property owners should be allowed to apply for additional earned ("bonus") density based on cluster residential plans that demonstrate high quality site planning as well as a project's ability to contribute to maintaining increased levels of open space, improvement of rural transportation deficiencies and adequately address environmental protection needs.
3. **Crossroads Development Areas:** Zoning ordinance revisions will be needed to complement the compact, higher density Development Areas that promote land uses that better respond to projected 21st century development influences. Areas designated the most highly developable ("Crossroads") areas along the Rt. 360 corridor should be further evaluated for long-term "nodal" economic development, mixed-use and residential projects, including detailed planning for capital improvements. Zoning modifications, municipal infrastructure planning, and capital improvements strategies will (a) increase property values, (b) incentivize quality, high density development in these areas and (c) discourage premature development before essential public services are delivered to these areas.
4. **Municipal Sanitary Sewer:** Along with the development of public water supplies, the County should place highest priority on expanding the County's municipal sewer services to accommodate projected growth. Prepare a feasibility study and implement a capital improvements plan for public sanitary sewer to serve the designated Development Areas, with the priority sewer plant locations on Smacks Creek as depicted on the FLUP. A location that permits gravity service to all of the designated Development Areas would be preferred. The plan also recognizes that the existing sewer plant and gravity sewer main system cannot be upgraded to adequately service both the Courthouse and Crossroads areas. Plans should be made for the eventual abandonment of this plant or evaluating its potential for conversion to a pump station to support the collector network for the new sewer plant.
5. **Municipal Water Source and Services:** Municipal water sources must be expanded over the next decade to serve even the most modest of population and employment growth. The County must initiate a planning and feasibility study of candidate locations for a surface water impoundment to serve the long-term domestic and fire prevention needs of the development areas. Primary emphasis must be on the creation of a water supply resource reservoir to be located within the Rural/Agricultural planning areas. It is important to recognize the long approval timeframe (5-10 years) involved with state and federal permit process, land acquisition and construction of a major water supply system. As municipal supplies are developed, the County will need to establish or implement well-head protection measures for both public and private wells.

Potential Surface Water Resources and Impoundments



Amelia Courthouse has a small public water system supplied by groundwater wells. A major surface water source could serve County, or even export, needs for generations to come. The County should begin planning now to develop a water source to meet its future development needs.

6. **Subdivision Density Criteria:** In order to implement environmental planning goals, the zoning ordinance should incorporate standards to better preserve sensitive environmental areas. These should be based on specific physical, terrain, and ecological factors related to a given parcel. The number of permitted lots allowed in the rezoning of land for future subdivisions should be conditioned on the "net developable area" of a parcel or lot. This would allow for the deduction of defined sensitive areas from the gross acreage of a property or specific development proposal. For example, if the minimum residential district lot requirement for a property is 1 dwelling per 10 acres but two acres of a given property are classified as floodplain or unbuildable slopes, then the subdivision of that parcel would require a minimum 12 acres. (Net Developable Area= Gross Area - Environmentally Sensitive Area, or, for the illustration above, 12 gross acres - 2 acres of floodplain and unbuildable slopes = 10 net developable acres.) The net acreage concept should apply conditionally to all future development, with applicable regulations to be integrated into the zoning amendments and subdivision. By-right subdivisions (not requiring rezoning and existing platted plots) would be exempt per state law.
7. **Jetersville Village Area:** The County should maintain the Jetersville Rural Village planning area on the FLUP, but recognize the need for necessary boundary adjustment that more accurately conform with existing land uses, roads and terrain characteristics. To serve the village area, the County should adopt zoning and subdivision regulations that better respond to the type of rural

development characteristics anticipated for Jetersville, including residential and commercial land use densities that provide adequate on-site open space for private septic systems.

8. **Capital Improvements Planning:** The County will need to establish a long-range capital improvements program that responds to population projections and periods of rapid growth; anticipating the level to which the County must provide infrastructure, facilities, services, and community improvements. The initial work on the capital improvements plan should begin immediately with the Planning Commission's input on intermediate- to long-range capital requirements to fulfill the goals and pathways of the Comprehensive Plan. The Planning Commission should be responsible to provide annual guidance and updates to the capital improvements planning process based on a compatibility review of the Comprehensive Plan.
9. **Zoning Ordinance Enhancements:** Most of the prior 2005's Plans recommendations for updating the existing zoning ordinance have not been implemented. As growth pressures increase over the coming decades, it will be essential to create a zoning ordinance that can better accommodate urban and suburban development demands. New zoning districts should be added to the ordinance as well as enhanced subdivision design standards addressing more intensive, mixed-use Development Service area land uses. Among other concerns, it will be necessary to strengthen the subdivision and zoning ordinance to eliminate "leap frog zoning" and "spot planning" pressures. The official zoning map should be updated to cure inconsistencies.
10. **Official Transportation Map:** A transportation master plan and official transportation map for the Courthouse and Corridor Development Areas should be prepared to ensure interconnectivity as properties develop in the future. Refer to the Transportation Chapter _ for detailed recommendations. It will be necessary to require dedication of necessary rights-of-way with future rezoning applications and subdivisions. The official map should become the key document as future development proposals are brought forward by the private sector.
11. **Proffers and Conditional Zoning:** Based on new State proffer zoning legislation, it will be necessary to re-examine and revise the County's proffer system to address cash proffers and application restrictions on certain types of conditions. Also, the existing proffer ordinance should be revised with the additional planning objectives to: (a) promote higher density development within the Courthouse, Mixed-Use and Economic Development planning areas; (b) promote agricultural industry and farming; and (c) discourage residential subdivisions and related rezoning in the rural and agricultural preservation.
12. **Tourism/Recreation/History:** Taking aim at regional tourism growth, the County must continue to capture the advantages of its history, culture, agricultural heritage, and natural scenic beauty. This can stimulate economic value while not increasing the County's tax burdens. Beginning with a focus on agri-business, the County should take the lead in organizing and coordinating a "visit Amelia" campaign that creates a benefit where the "whole is greater than the sum of its parts." Later, with the development of surface water resources (see 7. above), a major impoundment could be the primary feature of a County park serving both tourism and local recreational needs.

VIII. Agriculture

Chapter VIII Agriculture



Agriculture is fundamental to the history, character, culture, and economy of Amelia County. While the County's rural areas are valued to visitors and many residents for their beauty, quietness, openness, and environmental quality, it is important to remember that in Amelia, farming is big business.

Agriculture is a top industry within Amelia, both in terms of land area used and economic value. Farming is also a major County employer, both for individual proprietors of small farms, and for employees of larger farming operations. Virginia's farming sector continues to diversify, with new crops, growing on-farm sales, and the potential for agricultural tourism, all of which can benefit Amelia.

However, increases in rural residential development and outlying subdivisions have the potential to bring agricultural commerce and rural residential uses into conflict, including issues such as odor, noise, and moving farm machinery on public roads. As the County continues to grow, residential growth is likely to take existing farm lands out of agricultural production, while increasing land use conflicts between new homes and operating farms. In planning for and regulating new rural area growth, the County must continue to protect agricultural lands, as well as the economic asset that is agricultural business.

Farm Numbers and Acres

As of 2012, when the US Department of Agriculture conducted its most recent agricultural census, Amelia County contained 407 working farms, representing 88,273 acres of land in farms, or about 38% of all of the land in the County. These are significant figures when taking into account that this census does not include forestry and timber lands.

Farm numbers, size, and acreage in the County have fluctuated over time as development pressures, commodity prices, and other factors change. Amelia has seen some decrease in the total number of County farms over the last 10 to 15 years, while average farm size has increased slightly.

Size and Number of Amelia County Farms: 1997 - 2012

	1997	2002	2007	2012
Total Number of Farms	398	456	455	407
Total Acres	84,292	91,095	91,456	88,273
Average Size of Farm (acres)	212	200	201	217

Farm Production

As an economically productive industry, Amelia County farmers and agricultural enterprises now record nearly \$100 million worth of crop and livestock sales annually, a figure that has nearly doubled between 2002 and 2012. This level of production benefits the County by providing more jobs, increased tax revenue, and greater support for local businesses, including those providing support and ancillary services to farming operations.

Amelia County Farm Sales: 2012

	1997	2002	2007	2012
Total Farm Sales	\$57,676,000	\$51,603,000	\$68,744,000	\$98,832,000

Amelia County has maintained a very healthy agricultural economy, ranking among the most productive in Virginia in several major categories. The County is particularly strong in the poultry sector, whose revenues accounted for \$76.2 million, or 76% of all County farm product sales for the year 2012.

Amelia's rank among all 98 Virginia Counties:	
<i>(value of farm products sold)</i>	
• Poultry and eggs:	<i>6th</i>
• Tobacco:	<i>10th</i>
• Nursery and greenhouse products:	<i>12th</i>
• Milk:	<i>13th</i>
• Cattle:	<i>38th</i>
• Grains and dry beans:	<i>39th</i>

As a part of the growing Richmond region, Amelia has seen increased demand for rural residential lots and subdivisions, while many Amelia residents commute out of the County for work in a variety of regional enterprises. These two factors, land demand and employment demand, can both have the effect of shrinking the local farm economy. Many nearby counties have not been able to reach or maintain the levels of farm production seen in Amelia, especially those most heavily influenced by Richmond area growth, where land can be sold profitably to developers and non-farm employment opportunities are easier to find and commute to. However, Amelia County has continued to thrive among its peers as an agricultural producer.

County rank among all 98 Virginia Counties:	
<i>(value of farm products sold)</i>	
• Amelia:	<i>6th</i>
• Nottoway:	<i>18th</i>
• Cumberland:	<i>20th</i>
• Dinwiddie:	<i>24th</i>
• Prince Edward:	<i>60th</i>
• Powhatan:	<i>73rd</i>
• Chesterfield:	<i>81st</i>

Forestry

While farming may be the first thing that comes to mind when thinking of rural lands and rural economies, forestry is also a major land use in Amelia County, and also contributes substantially to the local economy, workforce, and tax base. Forests in all corners of the County are producing trees that will later be used for saw timber or for pulp wood, and may be harvested just once, or in successive plantings and harvests over long growing cycles.

Amelia County Forestry Sales: 2004 - 2013

	2004	2007	2010	2013
Value of Timber Cut	\$6,089,061	\$7,302,236	\$6,238,633	\$11,456,024

As of a recent forest survey in 2013, Amelia County had a total of 169,637 acres in forest land, representing approximately 73% of all lands in the County. While not all of these forest acres are currently slated for timber harvesting, it should be remembered that these forests are a valuable natural resource that rural land owners have a right to cut and use at any time. While in the past, some large timber companies held Amelia County properties for the large-scale planting and harvesting of timber, today most forest land is held by smaller owners and investors with a variety of land use interests that may or may not include forestry. In total, 70% of all County forest lands are considered to be non-industrial private forests.

Threats to the Farm Economy

While Amelia County has maintained, and even grown, its agricultural and forestry economy over recent years, it has also seen a significant amount of scattered rural residential development in the County's rural areas, and has begun to feel the effects of other potential threats to its traditional way of life and business. A variety of local, regional, and national trends, both economic and cultural, will continue to affect Amelia County farms and forests in the future, including:

- *Increasing demand from home buyers/or rural residential properties and lifestyles*
- *Population growth within the Richmond region*
- *Low Amelia County land prices relative to some neighboring counties, including Chesterfield and Powhatan*
- *Increasing environmental regulation at the state and federal level*
- *Potential profit for rural land owners who sell all or part of their land for residential development*
- *Increasing average age of farmers, combined with lower interest from younger generations in farming and forestry as a vocation*

The combination of these trends may negatively impact Amelia's rural landscape in the future. As the Richmond region grows, residents will need places to live. Many may look to Amelia County for its lower taxes and relatively more affordable home prices, or because they enjoy larger lots and rural places. For these homebuyers, Amelia is an affordable and beautiful place to live, while still being within commuting distance to work, shopping, and other attractions in Chesterfield or other

These trends are of serious concern for a County whose agriculture and forestry industries are a major economic contributor, and whose citizens value their rural lands and lifestyles. While growth and change can never be avoided, Amelia must find a way to maintain its economy and traditions in the future.

Use Value Taxation

One way that Amelia County has tried to support its agriculture industry is the implementation of Use Value Assessment. The Use Value Assessment program, sometimes called Land Use Taxation, reduces the assessed value of qualifying agricultural properties, therefore reducing the real estate tax that owners must pay. Under this system, the assessed value of a property is based only on the land's value for agricultural production, rather than on its fair market value for residential subdivision or other kinds of potential uses.

To be eligible for Use Value Taxation, properties must be at least 5 acres in size and must be occupied by a legitimate agricultural use such as cropland or pasture for livestock. While some Virginia jurisdictions include timbering and forestry uses as a qualifying use of land for the purposes of use value assessment, Amelia does not currently allow such uses to qualify.

IX. History & Historic
Resources



Chapter IX: History and Historic Resources

A Brief History of Amelia County

Amelia County was created in 1734 from parts of Price George and Brunswick Counties, and named for Princess Amelia, the second oldest daughter of King George II. Originally much larger than it is today, the county's present boundaries were established after Prince Edward and Nottoway Counties were divided away in 1754 and 1789.

The earliest inhabitants of what is now Amelia County were Native Americans of the Monacan tribe. By the late 17th century, native tribes began to be displaced by colonial settlers in search of new farmland.

Amelia's first courthouse was established near present day Truxillo shortly after the formation of the county, before being moved to the vicinity of present day Amelia Courthouse in 1793. By the late 19th century, Amelia Courthouse was a growing village with six stores, three churches, a hotel, a school, a mill, and various warehouses. The existing county courthouse was built in 1924, with several additions added later.

Since its earliest colonial settlement Amelia County's history has been a history of agriculture. The county's fertile soil supported an early plantation economy, including several large slave-holding tracts, focused on the cultivation of tobacco, Virginia's staple cash crop during its early history. The Appomattox River, along with Deep Creek, Flat Creek, and Namozine Creek, were used to move tobacco and other goods, while processing and warehousing operations were set up in Amelia Courthouse. Navigational improvements were made along the Appomattox, including several canals in Amelia County.

In 1810 the population of Amelia County was approximately 3,000 whites and 5,500 slaves. By 1820 the population had grown to approximately 3,600 whites and free blacks and 7,400 slaves. Of this population, the vast majority worked in agriculture, with a few engaged in commerce or manufacturing. The US Census of 1860 showed the County's population as 72.6% slaves, exceeded only by neighboring Nottoway County.

Amelia County figured prominently in the events of the Civil War, including Robert E. Lee's final retreat, passing through Amelia County and Amelia Courthouse before surrendering at Appomattox to end the war.

Following the Civil War, the county's largely tobacco based economy began to diversify, with timber and lumber becoming a major source of revenue. The expansion of the railroad allowed both goods and passengers to travel more easily, and shifted the focus of development away from the County's creeks and rivers. Several small settlements grew up along the railroads, including Chula. Rail travel also served early resort hotels welcoming tourists and touting the benefits of mineral springs.

Today, Amelia's agricultural economy has further diversified to include wheat, cattle, poultry, other grains, and livestock. Farming still stands at the heart of the county's culture and economy.

Amelia's Century Farms

The Virginia Century Farm Program honors those farms that have been in the same family, and in continuous operation, for at least 100 consecutive years. Amelia County is proudly home to ten such farms:

- **Bell Farm - *R. Franklin Bell***
- **Cedar Ridge Farm - *William B. Ford, William A. Ford and Christopher M. Ford***
- **Grub Hill Farm - *Eddie Ashman***
- **Oakmulgee Dairy Farm - *Charles Moyer***
- **Orlondon - *Mr. and Mrs. Russell Aubrey Smith, Jr.***
- **Shank's Farm - *David E. Shank***
- **Silver Point Farm - *James Herbert Hite***
- **The Cottage - *Virginia Lee Courter***
- **22 Oaks - *Helen P. Warriner-Burke***
- **Wingo's Angus • *Alvin and Tammy Wingo***

Historic Resources

Amelia has significant historic resources, including places and structures that reflect the architecture and culture of Virginia's colonial, agricultural, and Civil War history. These historic resources include the houses, farm buildings, churches, and bridges, as well as sites and areas where significant historic events occurred.

Two historic sites with links to the county's Civil War history are particularly significant, Sailor's Creek Battlefield and the Route of Lee's Retreat.

Sailor's Creek Battlefield was the site of one of the last major battles of the Civil War, taking place only three days before the surrender of Robert E. Lee at Appomattox ended the war. Located on the western edge of the county, the battlefield site is now a 341 acre state park with a visitor's center and seasonal tours of Hillsman House. The park also hosts interpretive programs and living history exhibits at various times throughout the year.

The Route of Lee's Retreat is an interpretive trail that follows the retreat of Robert E. Lee's army through Amelia in early April 1865 with the Union army in pursuit. The roads that coincide with the path of these final days of the Civil War have been identified for a driving tour, with roadside markers pointing out historical events, and additional information available online or through AM radio broadcasts. The route is part of the Virginia Civil War Trails program, and includes Namozine Church, Amelia Court House, Jetersville, Amelia Springs, Deatonville, and Sailor's Creek Battlefield State Park.

A total of thirty-four historical sites have been identified by the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, with seven sites listed on the State and/or National Historic Registers, including the following:

Grub Hill Church - 1849-50

Consecrated by Bishop William Meade in 1852, this church was part of the re-activation of the Episcopal denomination in rural Virginia during the mid 19th century.

Egglestetton - 1760's

This is a medium-sized plantation house, featuring a gambrel roof, built before the 1770's for Joseph Eggleston.

Farmer House - early 19th century

Example of an early 1820's, large, wood frame I-house, with a center passage, single-pile plan.

Haw Branch - built soon after the revolutionary war

This is an outstanding example of southside Federal architecture, of the early 19th century.

Wigwam - 18th and early 19th century dwelling

This was the home of William Branch Giles, Virginia Governor in 1827.

Dykeland - mid 19th century

This is a representative example of both vernacular and high-style architecture in Amelia County of the mid-19th century, and residence of Lewis E. Harvie, entrepreneur and local political leader.

X. Natural Resources

Chapter X: Natural Resources



Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the County's key environmental characteristics. This includes: geology, soils, topography and terrain, groundwater, forestry and timber, and watersheds. Inasmuch as most of the natural resources information has not changed over the centuries, the following documentation summarizes the natural resources same information that was included in previous versions of the Comprehensive Plan.

Geology

Amelia County is located in Virginia's Piedmont, and is underlain primarily by igneous and metamorphic rocks. Sedimentary rocks occur in the eastern part of the County, including sandstone and shale. The bedrock throughout the Piedmont is overlain by a nearly continuous layer of loose, weathered material called "regolith" which is composed of soil, weathered rock and alluvium deposited from streams (See Figure E-1).

Masses of course-grained igneous rock known as pegmatite are common, particularly in the central portion of the County. These rocks have historically been a source of mineral production. Mica has been the most significant commercial material derived from the pegmatite and was mined intermittently for about a century, reaching a peak during World War II when 55 sites were in production within the County. Some pegmatite mines have yielded feldspar and kaolin for pottery; quartz for ornamental aggregate in concrete; and beryl, columbite-tantalite, as well as a variety of gem minerals such as garnet, topaz, and amazonstone.

Very limited commercial mining is currently underway in the County, although the Morefield Mine, known for its pegmatite production and located on Route 628, has been reopened for both recreational and commercial purposes. In addition, the County in past years has granted land use approvals for several quarries for extracting rock. Areas with significant potential for mining and extractive activities are shown in Figure E-2.

Soils and Slopes

A detailed soil survey of Amelia County has been previously completed and mapped by the Soil Conservation Service (See Figure E-3). The Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation, Division of Soil and Water Conservation in conjunction with the Information Support Systems Laboratory at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University prepared a digitized data base of this information that is available to the County.

County Soils Mapping Units

Soil Unit	Approximate % of County
1. Cecil-Appling-Wedowee	60%
2. Georgeville-Cid-Herndon	5%
3. Wedowee-Appling-Chewacla	10%
4. Mayodan-Creedmoor	<3%
5. Appling-Wedowee-Winnsboro	15%
6. Winnsboro-Helena-Wedowee	<5%
7. Chewacla-Dogue-Chastain	<3%

Sources: U.S.D.A. Soil Conservation Service;
Herd Planning & Design, 2005 Comprehensive Plan

Soil Properties

Soils are typically evaluated in terms of their fundamental properties and characteristics as well as in terms of how these properties affect the general suitability of the soil for various land use activities such as agriculture, timber, rural development on septic systems and urban development on central utilities. The basic properties that facilitate such evaluations include slope, depth to bedrock, shrink-swell potential and permeability.

Slope Most soils are typically associated with defined ranges of slopes, due to the close relationship between the processes which formed the soil type and those which formed the topographic shape of the land forms. In general, areas with very little slope are often associated with poorly drained soils and areas with very steep slopes often have rock, floodplain or other limitations for human activities.

Depth to bedrock The depth to bedrock essentially indicates the thickness of the saprolite material or regolith layer between the bedrock and the surface, which reflects the amount of material that is available for excavation and other uses. Shallow depths to bedrock can be associated with limitations for constructing septic systems and related development constraints.

Shrink-swell potential Shrink-swell properties reflect the change in volume of the soil associated with a change in moisture content. High shrink-swell potential is typically associated with clay content and can cause difficulties or require special designs for foundations, road bases and other structural elements.

Permeability Permeability is a measure of the rate at which water and air travel through the soil. Typically, permeability measurements are used to determine the rate of downward movement or "percolation" of water through the soil when the soil is saturated. Such a measurement provides a rating of the capability of the soil to support septic systems as well as for structural designs and drainage systems.

The general properties of selected major soil types are summarized in the following table.

Selected Properties of Soils in Amelia County

Soil Series	Slope Range	Depth to Bedrock	Shrink/Swell Potential	Permeability	Suitability for Agriculture	Suitability for Timber	Suitability for Drainfields
1. Appling	0-15 %	60"	Moderate	Moderate	Good	Fair	Moderate
2. Cecil	0-15 %	60"	Moderate	Moderate	Good	Fair	Moderate
3. Georgeville	0-15 %	60"	Low	Moderate	Good	Good	Moderate
4. Helena	0-15 %	48-60"	Moderate	Slow	Fair	Fair	Severe
5. Herndon	0-15 %	84"	Low/Mod.	Moderate	Good/Fair /Poor	Fair	Mod./Severe

Sources: Piedmont Planning District Commission; General Soil Map of Virginia; General Soil Map of Amelia County; 2005 Comprehensive Plan

Soils Suitability for Agriculture and Forestry

Prime and important agricultural soils are those that are best suited for agricultural use. These soils are usually found in areas that are not steep or stony and are well drained and watered (See Figure E-4). They can be found in isolated patches throughout the piedmont, although they tend to be found in alluvial deposits near rivers. There are other soil groups that while not classified as prime, are very productive, especially for pasture and timber. Quality soils are the foundation of the County's agricultural industry, one of its largest and most valuable economic base sectors.

Agricultural land is being threatened by urban expansion and scattered rural development because soils that are suitable for farming are also usually well suited for development due to their good drainage, mild slopes, depth to bedrock and good percolation for septic fields. The suitability of soil for timber production is consistently very good over most areas of the County, which is consistent with the County's strong timber industry.

Soils Suitability for Development

Soil suitability for development is typically determined by the suitability for on-site septic drainfields and for building construction which typically includes factors such as depth to water table, depth to rock, slope of grade, etc (See Figure E-5).. Most County soils have a depth to bedrock of at least four to five feet, although in some places, bedrock comes within two feet or less of the surface. Slopes are generally moderate, mostly less than 15%. The soils with low permeability, steep slopes and shallow depth to bedrock are less suitable for construction, particularly for installation of on-site septic or central sewer systems. While some areas of the County contain various combinations of these limitations, for the most part, the restrictions are not severe.

Generally, soil with good percolation for septic fields is most easily found in the central areas of the County where the land is moderate to well drained. Early SCS mapping indicated that the northern and western areas tend to have more rock and clay, and some areas east of Deep Creek also have septic limitations due to low permeability. However, present day health standards have placed higher expectations on "soils performance" for drainfields. As such, generalized mapping cannot be employed with any level of confidence that site-specific soils might be suitable for septic systems.

In those areas where the permeability is poor, the land area needed to locate a suitable a "natural" septic field site may be larger than the minimum allowable lot size, and in areas where the soil and subsoil geology is rocky, it may produce excessive costs that could preclude or discourage the installation of alternative engineered drainfield systems. None of these conditions would necessarily preclude all development, but the engineering measures that may be needed, such as specially designed foundations, retaining walls, and drainfields, can increase the cost of development in those areas, thereby reducing development feasibility and shifting development pressures to other locations.

Topography and Steep Slopes

Amelia County has gently rolling topography, typical of the Virginia Piedmont region. This topography is generally well suited for either agriculture or development. Elevations range from 200 to 500 feet above sea level. Because of the generally moderate nature of the terrain, steep slopes (typically defined as those of greater than 25%) are found on only a very small percentage of the land, mostly along the stream corridors and frequently within the 100 year flood plain. Approximately a third of the County has essentially level land with slopes between 0% to 8%, with another half of the County containing moderate slopes of between 8% and 15%. The County's topography forms a series peninsulas or fingers of land that are divided and defined by the drainage ways of the creeks and streams. The better soils tend to be located along the ridge tops of these peninsulas. The pattern of Amelia's human settlements and roadways follows very closely along the tops of these formations as well.

Groundwater

In the Piedmont region, precipitation is the only source of groundwater recharge, unlike some other regions of Virginia where deeper regional groundwater flow systems may provide additional recharge capability. It is estimated that approximately 20 to 30 percent of precipitation in the region effectively reaches the groundwater system and serves to recharge the groundwater supply.

Wells are the sole water source for residents of Amelia. Most homeowners have private wells within their own properties, while others participate in a public water system that is also drawn from wells. Most wells in the County are in the range of 50 to 150 feet in depth, although most new wells are drilled and tend to be in the range of 150 to 500 feet. The water table above bedrock is dropping in some areas, causing some older, shallower wells to fail.

Natural factors such as mineral composition of the water-bearing rock, seasonal variation in the amount of water recharge, duration of contact between rock and water and the mean annual air temperature affect water quality. Manmade contaminants may also affect the quality of groundwater. Potential sources of such contaminants include septic systems, sanitary landfills, sewage lagoons, leaking pipelines, leaking fuel storage tanks, improperly constructed wells, agricultural activities such as animal wastes and fertilizer and pesticide applications, highway de-icing salts and infiltration of poor quality surface water from lakes and streams.

Wellhead protection will be necessary as areas of the County grow and develop. Especially vulnerable are the public water wells located near Amelia Courthouse. As the area most likely to experience growth, the County must monitor the quality of its wells and take reasonable measures to prevent construction or industrial activities from disturbing these wells. One method would be to require the location of nearby wells to be noted on any site plan or other development documents. Within the rural area septic fields also pose a danger to private wells. Contaminants from septic fields, including nitrate, sulfate and chloride, can move down to the water table even when a septic drainfield is placed in appropriate soils. Thus, the placement and design of septic fields is critically important to long term groundwater quality in rapidly developing areas of the County.

Surface Water and Watersheds

While groundwater supplies offer several advantages over surface water as a public water supply resource, the County can no longer rely on groundwater as its sole supply source. In the 21st Century, Amelia County must look to reservoirs as the preferred option to accommodate its potential residential and industrial growth expansion.

Amelia County is contained entirely within the Appomattox River watershed, with all of the County's creeks and streams ultimately flowing to the Appomattox. The major surface water systems include Nibbs Creek and Flat Creek north of Route 360, Smacks Creek, Beaverpond Creek and Deep Creek south of the Amelia Courthouse area, and the Winticomack and Namozine Creeks draining the southeastern end of the County (See Figure E-6).

Past gauging station studies on the Appomattox River north of Chula measured an average flow of 441 million gallons of water per day, while a station on Deep Creek just east of its intersection with Route 153 measured an average of 83 million gallons per day. The following table depicts the relative size of the major watersheds in the County.

Major Watersheds in Amelia County

Watershed	Approximate % of County
1. Appomattox River (and other smaller tributaries)	40%
2. Flat Creek	25%
3. Nibbs Creek	10%
4. Deep Creek	20%
5. Namozine Creek	5%

Source: 2005 Comprehensive Plan Herd Planning & Design

The 2016 Comprehensive Plan points to the critical need to begin feasibility for surface water supply and distribution systems.

Floodplains

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) undertook a comprehensive study for all watercourses draining more than one square mile within Amelia County. The only uses which should be permitted in floodplains are those which do not change the hydraulic characteristics of the river, would not be damaged by floodwater and would not convey pollutants downstream if flooded. Some examples of the above include agriculture and recreation.

Wetlands

Wetlands are defined by the Clean Water Act as "*areas that are inundated or saturated by surface or groundwater at a frequency and duration sufficient to support the prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions.*" Approximately 6,092 acres in Amelia County have been identified as non-tidal wetlands by the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation. This constitutes about 2.7% of the County's land total area. Most of the wetlands in Amelia County are located along rivers and within valleys, predominantly in and around the floodplain areas. Wetlands must be avoided in present day development practices. Prior to approval of any site plan or subdivision plat, a landowner must determine wetland locations with the help of a certified wetlands scientist and develop a methodology and plan to protect these areas during and after development.

Forests

Forests are a primary element in the natural landscape and economy of Amelia County and its neighboring jurisdictions in the central piedmont area. Forests cover nearly three-quarters of the County's land area and produce multiple environmental, economic and cultural benefits. In addition to the economic benefits of timber production, forests provide habitats for many plant and wildlife species, resources for outdoor recreation, protection from sedimentation and erosion, groundwater recharge areas and visual buffers between land uses. Forests are an inherently renewable resource and therefore, with the use of proper timber management practices, the County's forest land can continue to provide these multiple benefits to the community.

Figure E-1
Geologic Resources
(Generalized)

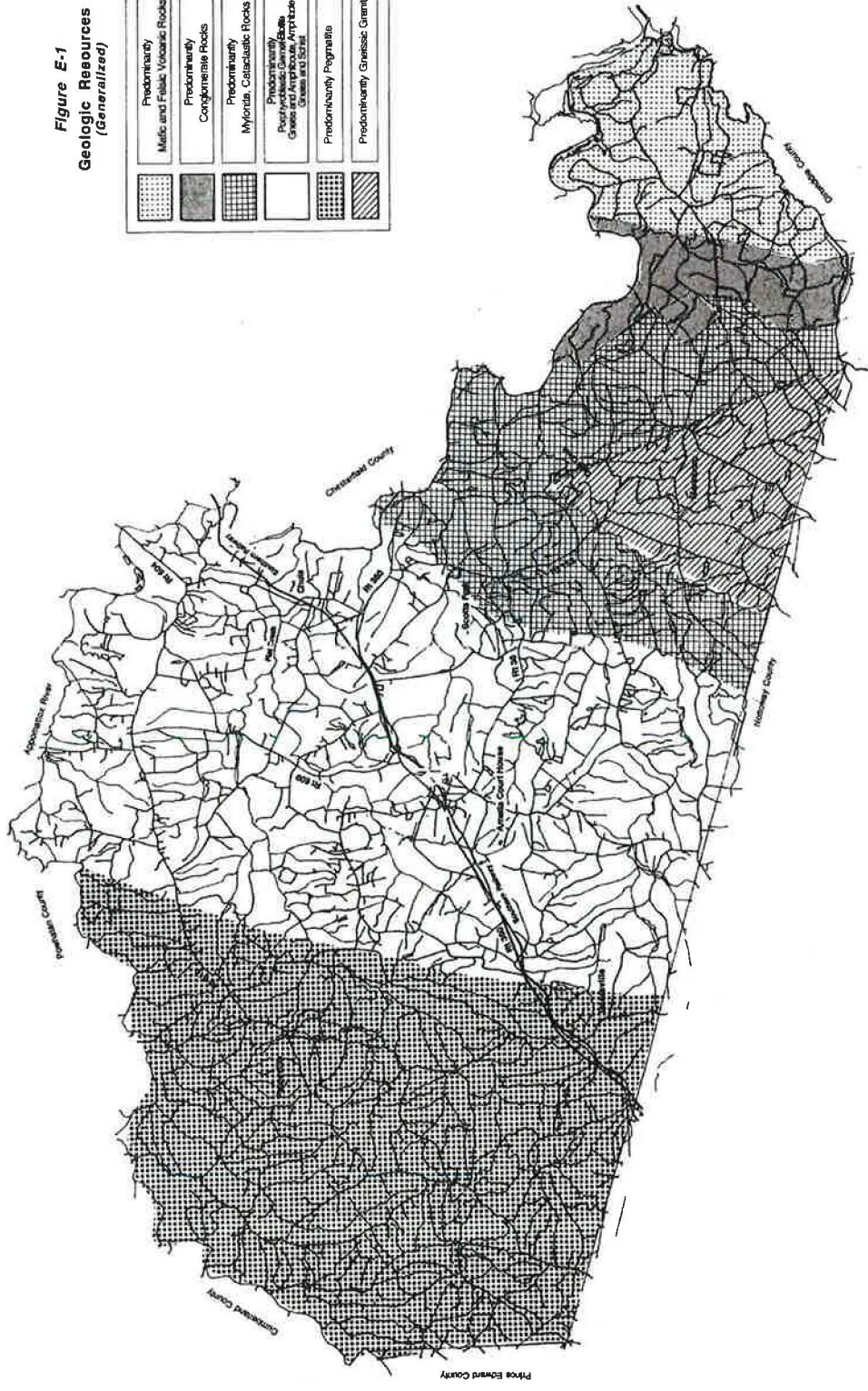
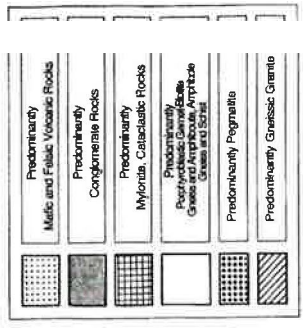
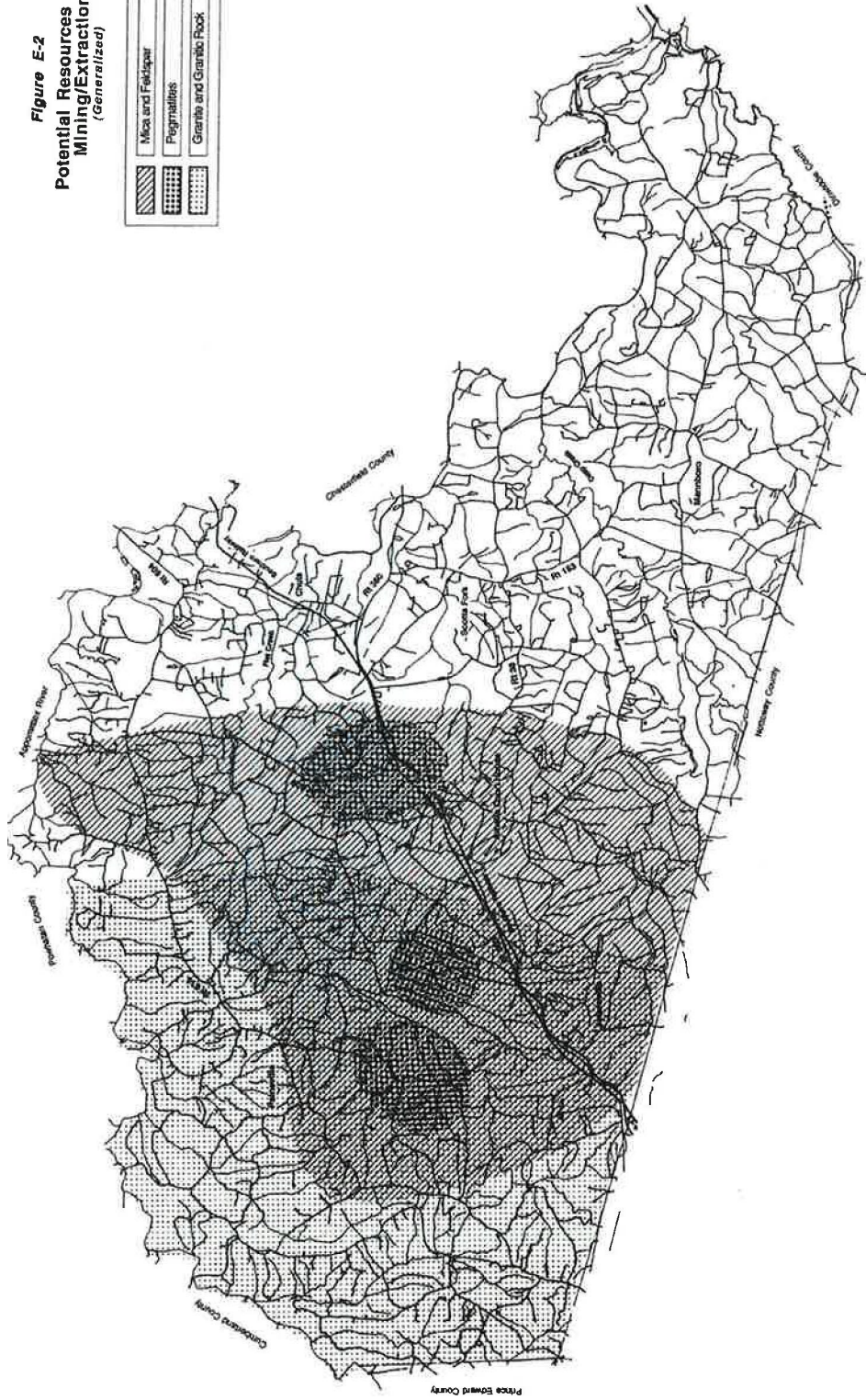
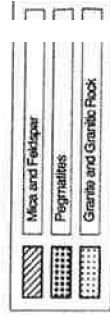


Figure E-2
Potential Resources for
Mining/Extraction
(Generalized)



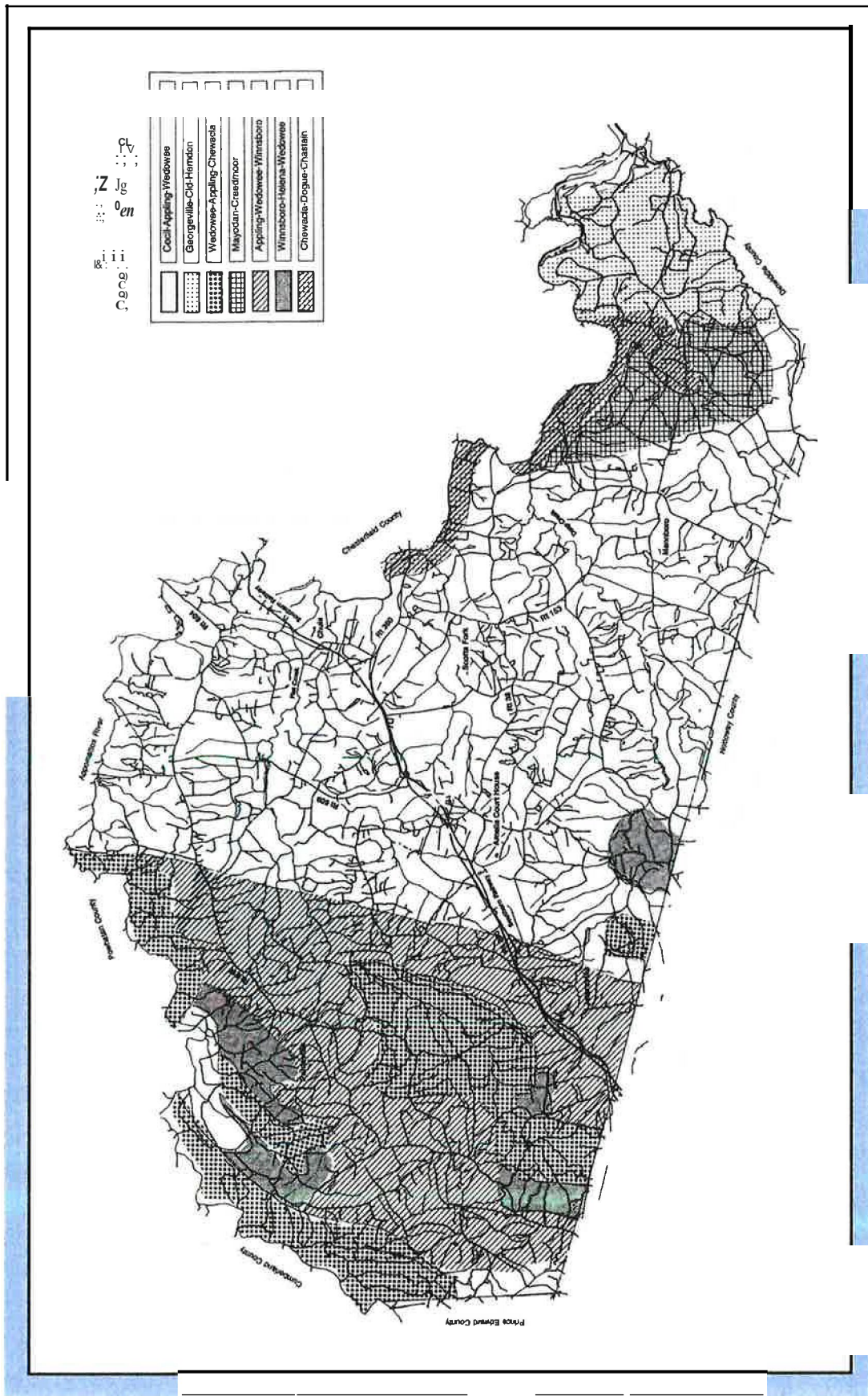


Figure E-4
Soil Suitability for
Cultivated Crops
(General/seed)

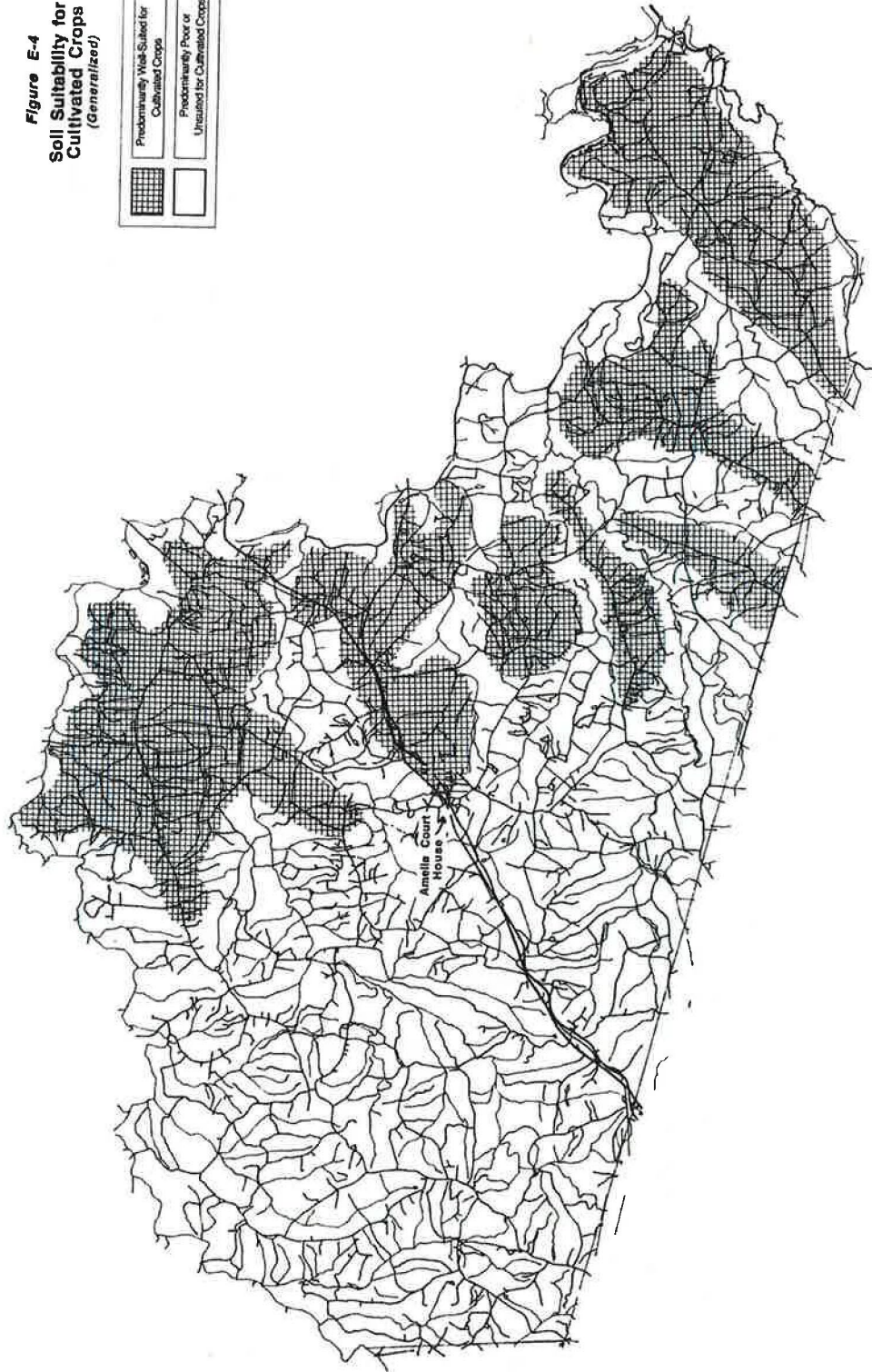
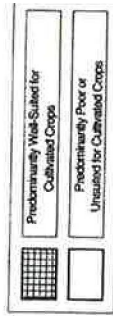


Figure E-5
Soil Suitability for Septic Systems
(Generalized)



10'

Major Drainages

Appomattox River
Flat Creek
Nibbs Creek
Deep Creek
Namozine Creek (Major Floodplains)

