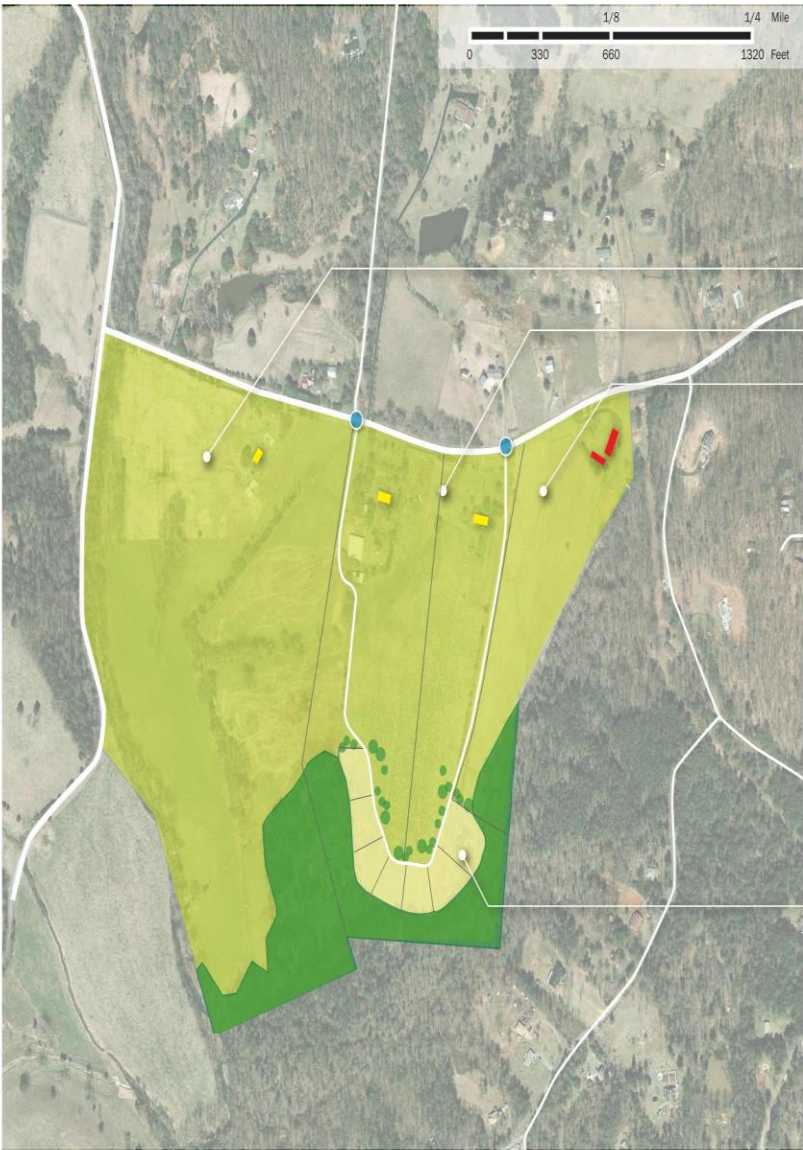


Chart 1. Rural Lands Designation Description	
1. Basic Description	Rural Lands are areas containing farms, forests and scattered houses, exclusively outside of the PSA, where a lower level of public service delivery exists or where utilities and urban services do not exist and are not planned for in the future. Rural Lands uses are intended to help protect and enhance the viability of agricultural and forestal resources and compatible rural economic development uses as important components of the local economy.
2. Recommended Uses	<p>Appropriate primary uses include traditional agricultural and forestal activities, but also innovative agriculture, horticulture, silviculture, specialty or niche farming, commercial and non-commercial equine opportunities, agri-tourism, rural-based public or commercial recreation, rural-support businesses and certain public or semi- public and institutional uses that require a spacious site and are compatible with the natural and rural surroundings.</p> <p>Retail and other commercial uses serving Rural Lands are encouraged to be located at planned commercial locations on major thoroughfares inside the PSA. However, appropriately-scaled and located direct agricultural or forestal-support uses (including agri-business and eco-tourism), home-based occupations, or certain uses which require very low intensity settings relative to the site in which it will be located may be considered on the basis of a case-by-case review, provided such uses are compatible with the natural and rural character of the area and are in accordance with the Rural Lands Development Standards. These uses should be located in a manner that minimizes effects on agricultural and forestal activities, and where public services and facilities, especially roads, can adequately accommodate them.</p>
3. Recommended Density	Residential development is not a recommended use and is discouraged outside the Primary Service Area in the Rural Lands. Residences associated with agricultural and forestal activities may be appropriate, but subdivision of lots should occur at a density of no greater than one residence per 20 acres. A very limited amount of residential development could be permitted in the form of rural clusters, provided significant preservation of the natural resources is achieved, such development does not interrupt rural qualities or character, and the development standards for rural clusters listed below are followed.
Rural Lands Development Standards	
4. Use and Character Compatibility	<p>a) Uses in Rural Lands should reflect and enhance the rural character of the County. Particular attention should be given to the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Locating structures and uses outside of sensitive areas;</li> <li>Maintaining existing topography, vegetation, trees, and tree lines to the maximum extent possible, especially along roads and between uses;</li> <li>Discouraging development on farmland, open fields, scenic roadside vistas, and other important agricultural/forestal soils and resources;</li> <li>Encouraging enhanced landscaping to screen structures located in open fields using a natural appearance or one that resembles traditional hedgerows and windbreaks;</li> <li>Locating new driveways or service roads so that they follow existing contours and old roadway corridors whenever feasible;</li> <li>Generally limiting the height of structures to an elevation below the height of surrounding mature trees and scaling buildings to be compatible with the character of the existing community;</li> <li>Minimizing the number of street and driveway intersections along the main road by providing common driveways; and</li> <li>Utilizing lighting only where necessary and in a manner that eliminates glare and brightness.</li> </ol> <p>b) Encourage the preservation and reuse of existing agricultural structures such as barns, silos, and houses.</p> <p>c) Site more intensive uses in areas where the existing road network can accommodate the additional vehicle trips without the need for significant upgrades or modifications that would impact the character of the rural road network.</p>
5. Rural Clusters	<p>If built, rural clusters should develop with the following guidelines:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Densities should be no higher than the maximum permitted density in the underlying zoning district. Lot sizes may be reduced as appropriate to maximize the preservation of rural view-sheds and resources as described in the standards below.</li> <li>Minimize the impact of residential development by retaining a substantial amount (at least two-thirds) of the site in large, undivided blocks of land for permanent open space, farming, timbering and/or rural economic uses.</li> <li>Appropriate goals for open space and lot layout include preservation of farmland, open fields, scenic vistas, woodland, meadows, wildlife habitats, and vegetation; protection of environmentally sensitive land including wetlands, stream corridors, and steep slopes; important historic and archaeological resources, and roadway buffers.</li> <li>The goals of the open space and lot layout should be shown on a conceptual plan, and the design should support these goals. For instance, if preservation of agriculture is one of the main goals of the open space, the open space should encompass that land which is most suitable for farming (topography, soils). Blocks of land large enough to support a farm should be set aside in the open space. In addition, potential conflicts between the uses should be minimized by designing buffers between the farmland and the residential development. Similar design considerations would be expected to support other open space goals as well.</li> <li>The open space should be placed in a conservation easement or the equivalent to ensure that the land will remain undeveloped.</li> <li>The visibility of the development from the main road should be minimized. It is recommended that lots be placed along an access road rather than along the main route so that the view from the main route still appears rural in nature.</li> </ol>



# Rural Lands

## SAMPLE DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT

This illustration represents one potential way that the policies in the Land Use chapter for this land use could be interpreted. Alternate concepts that follow these policies may also be acceptable. This development concept is only for illustrative purposes and design guidelines, policies and ordinance requirements are a factor, particularly with respect to detailed requirements such as landscaping

Large farm remains in agricultural / forestal use

Medium sized parcel divided into two large lots managed as small farms

Small farm managed as rural economic enterprise with agritourism and winery use



Small rural cluster sited away from roads and screened by trees to preserve rural viewsheds

Legend			
Mixed use	Low Density Residential	Common Open Space	
Commercial	Moderate Density Residential - Level 1	Wooded or Landscaped Buffer Areas	
Civic	Moderate Density Residential - Level 2		
Industrial	Parking	Pedestrian/Bike Paths	Roadway Interconnectivity

# 3 RESIDENTIAL: RURAL

## INTENT AND CHARACTER

### FUTURE LAND USE

Per the Future Land Use Map, **Rural Lands** are areas containing farms, forests and scattered houses, exclusively outside of the Primary Service Area (PSA), where a lower level of public service delivery exists or where utilities and urban services do not exist and are not planned for in the future. Rural Lands are intended to help protect and enhance the viability of agricultural and forestal resources and support compatible rural economic development; residential development is not recommended.

A very limited amount of residential development may be permitted in the form of rural clusters and small residences in support of agricultural or forestal activities. Residential building in rural areas shall provide significant preservation of the natural resources, preserve rural qualities and character, keep uninterrupted views open and unmarred, and be compatible in scale with the surrounding landscape.

#### Rural Lands

Residential development is not recommended. Minor residential construction may be permitted in some cases. Standards for siting and design are included in this chapter.

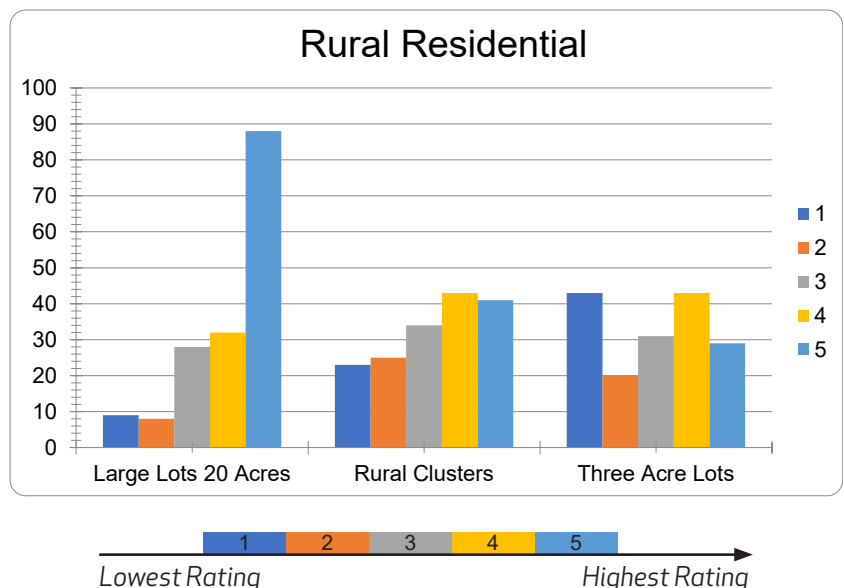
### ENGAGE2045 PUBLIC INPUT

The 2019 survey and Round 1 public input from Engage2045 revealed a strong desire to maintain rural and pastoral qualities across the County. Preservation of the natural environment was listed as the most important issue for the County to address. Many residents stated that the natural and rural places are what they most value about living in James City County.

The Engage2045 survey conducted in January/February 2021 reflected a continued desire for natural surroundings, lower density development, and preservation of a rural character across many areas of the County. Participant comments trended toward the belief that higher density development would result in more traffic and crowded schools.

The desired rural character pairs with the desire for open space, passive recreation, and preservation of natural resources. Rural development that protects and complements the landscape, is sited to maintain open views, and preserves vegetation and farmland is ideal. In order to best preserve large swaths of usable land, small clusters of single-family housing are also appropriate for rural settings, provided they continue to support and uphold the pastoral setting.

*Metroquest Survey results: For the purposes of this survey, language is not directly linked to Future Land Use designations.*





## SITE DESIGN

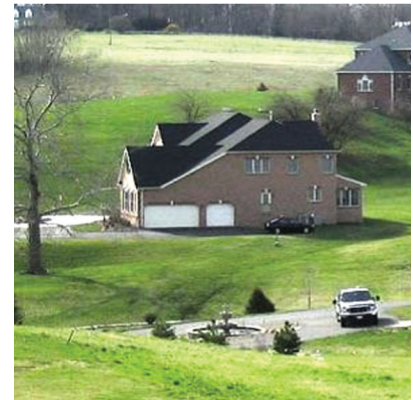
- 1 **Small groupings of related buildings may be sited together in a farmstead or cluster form.**

Buildings should be set far back from the street and have minimal to no visual impact from the road. Drive lanes should follow natural topography and include turns that reduce their visual impact from the street. Existing trees, meadows, and fields should be preserved.



### RURAL DESIGN STANDARDS: FARMSTEAD

- 1 **Building design should be 1-2 stories tall and use architectural elements, colors, and materials that resemble farmhouses and barns.**
- 2 **Buildings visible from the road shall pursue a higher design standard and ensure that scale, form, and color are synonymous with a farmstead character and harmonious with the landscape.**



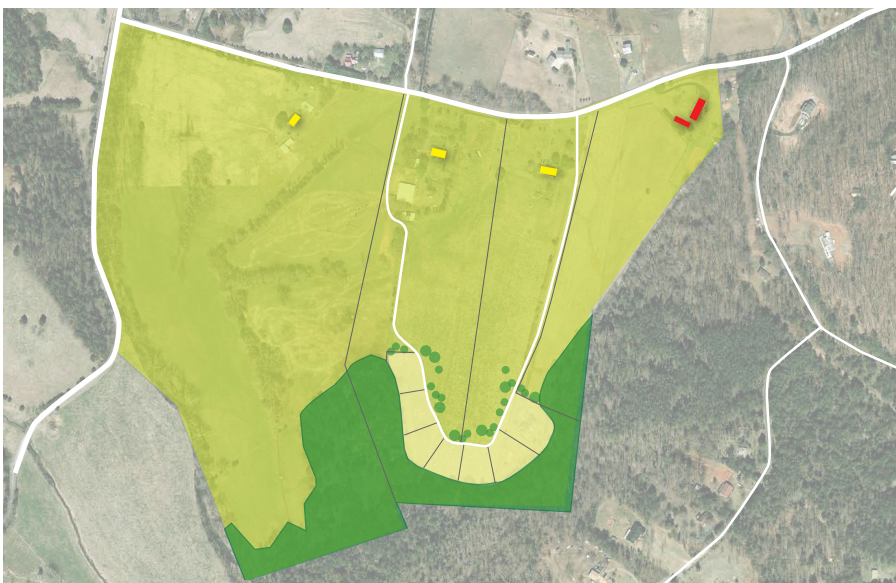
### RURAL DESIGN STANDARDS: CLUSTERS

- 1 **Building design should employ either a farmstead architectural style or a Colonial architecture style as described in Chapter 4: Small Lots.**
- 2 **Trees and landscaping shall ensure that no more than 2 buildings are visible from the road and should be set back as far as possible from the road.**

Roof elements of other buildings may be visible, but landscape or berming along the frontage street shall substantially screen any cluster development and maintain clear views of landscape.



*Images shown from the Metroquest Questionnaire vary in levels of community support.*



*Example of preferred rural site design showing large preserved working farms, large lots of at least 20 acres, or small clusters sited and screened so as to not be visible from roadways.*