

Growth Management Chapter.

Goal pg 3.1

Albemarle County's Development Areas will be attractive, vibrant areas for residents and businesses, supported by services, facilities, and infrastructure. Growth will be directed to the Development Areas and the County's Rural Area with its agricultural, forestal, historic, cultural, scenic, and natural resources will be preserved for future generations.

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Strategy 1a: Continue to encourage approval of new development proposals in the Development Areas as the designated location for new residential, commercial, industrial, and mixed-use development. Only approve new development proposals in the Rural Area that are supported by Rural Area goals, objectives, and strategies.

Economic Development Chapter

Objective 1 pg. 6.5

Promote economic development activities that help build on the County's assets while recognizing distinctions between expectations for the Development Areas and the Rural Area.

Rural Area Chapter

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Features expected in the Rural Area include:

6. Distinct boundaries between the Development Areas and buildings and sites that are clearly rural; and

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Farmers and other residents of the Rural Area need historic crossroads communities not only as places to find basic support services, but also as centers of community life.

Land Use Plan for the Rural Area

Policy and Zoning Ordinance changes are recommended to promote the County's preferred uses for the Rural Area, including supportive uses for agriculture, historic preservation, tourism, crossroads communities, and strengthening land conservation initiatives. The strategies discussed in this Chapter all share the goal of helping to keep the Rural Area rural.

Consideration of New Uses in the Rural Area

It is important that any change take place slowly with enough time to evaluate potential impacts. Analysis of the impacts of the recent Zoning Ordinance changes should be conducted before adopting new zoning regulations. Policies, programs and regulations that address only one aspect of the Rural Area to the detriment of others should be avoided or, where already in place, revised. Only by prudent and thoughtful decision making will the Rural Area resources be preserved while encouraging uses that benefit the economy.

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Objective 5: Recognize and support crossroads communities, which serve as rural scale community meeting places and provide opportunities for residents to take part in community life.

Strategy 5b: Consider amending the Zoning Ordinance to allow for small-scale, supportive uses in designated crossroads communities. Examples of such uses are country stores, offices, day care facilities, doctor/dentist offices, and public institutional uses, such as post offices.

Crossroads communities are intended to provide only essential goods and services for their immediate area. Therefore, they should be limited in size, with carefully delineated permissible uses. Reusing existing buildings, especially historic buildings, is preferable to building new structures. Such existing buildings would need to be renovated and reused at a scale that is appropriate for the area and that does not require additional infrastructure. Expansions of infrastructure, such as roads, water, or sewer, should not be provided to these crossroads centers.

Consideration should be given to allowing some of these uses by-right in existing buildings with performance standards such as square footage and architectural features that are reflective of historic and rural area uses to be established in the Zoning Ordinance. Residents of crossroads communities need to be involved in determining appropriate uses for those communities. It should be noted that this goal emphasizes providing greater support for existing Rural Area residents rather than encouraging or supporting new residential development in the Rural Area.

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Objective 6: Provide distinct boundaries between the Rural Area and the Development Areas.

Residents and visitors sense they are in the Rural Area and not the Development Areas when they are surrounded by a large number of agricultural uses, forests, and natural resources. Having a clear distinction between the Development Areas and the Rural Area is important in order to maintain a necessary environment for agriculture, as well as for tourism.

Strategy 6a: Promote use of Rural Area land up to the boundary with the Development Areas. Do not require transitional areas between the Rural Area and Development Areas.

Because the Development Areas covers only 5% of the total County land area, it is expected to have a density similar to the City. Wise use of the Development Areas necessitates building up to the boundary with the Rural Area. However, development is not expected to transition from a dense Development Area through a large lot suburban zone into the Rural Area. More guidance

on the relationship of the Rural Area to the Development Areas at their joint boundary is found in the Neighborhood Model Guidance section in the Appendix to this Plan.

Strategy 6b: Develop rural design standards to be used in conjunction with site plans in the Rural Area, especially for parking lots, signage, entrance requirements, and landscaping.

This Plan identifies uses that support rural area residents, such as community centers and places of worship. It also recommends consideration of new uses that can support the agricultural and forestry economy. Some of these uses require conformity with current zoning standards for features such as parking lots, landscaping, pedestrian access, signage, and the like; however, site development plan standards are intended for the Development Areas. Rural standards are needed to help rural uses blend better into the rural landscape and function more appropriately as a rural use. They should be developed and adopted as part of the Zoning Ordinance.

Rural Interstate Interchanges

Interstate interchanges are included in this Section because they have the capacity to both reflect and detract from the rural nature of the County. For travelers on Interstate 64, views from the interstate may provide the only visitor experience and memory of the County. For those traveling on this highway, rural uses along the interstate reflect the rural character of much of Albemarle County.

Three and one-half rural interstate interchanges are located in the Rural Area; Crozet, Ivy, Black Cat Road, and the southern part of the Shadwell interchange. These interchanges are different in character and function from each other, as well as from interchanges in the Development Areas. The Ivy interchange is very rural with narrow winding roads in both directions. The Black Cat interchange has narrow winding roads in one direction and a connection to Route 250 East in the other direction. The Crozet interchange with Route 250 West is better developed as it provided the only east-west connection over Afton Mountain prior to the construction of I-64. It is still heavily travelled. The southern part of the Shadwell Interchange connects directly to Route 250 East and is also a heavily travelled area. Development adjacent to and dependent upon rural interstate interchanges is not served by public water and sewer nor is it intended to be served by public utilities. Interstate interchanges in the Rural Area should not be used as tourist destinations or tourist "stops" along Interstate 64.

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Strategy 6c: Permit uses at rural interstate interchanges that support agriculture and forestry.

Uses allowed by right in the Rural Area are appropriate at interchanges. Some uses allowed by special use permit may also be appropriate at interchanges because they provide a unique opportunity for agricultural goods to be transported to markets outside of the County. Size, scale, visibility, and function should all be considered for new uses allowed by special use permit. Traffic generated by such uses should be typical of agricultural uses and not large frequent trucking activities on rural roads.

Criteria for Review of New Uses As new uses are proposed in the Rural Area, it is essential that they be able to meet the following standards. New uses should:

- relate directly to the Rural Area and need a Rural Area location in order to be successful, (e.g., a farm winery has to be located in the Rural Area and would be unlikely to succeed in the Development Areas);
- be compatible with, and have a negligible impact, on natural, cultural, and historic resources;
- not conflict with nearby agricultural and forestal uses;
- reflect a size and scale that complements the character of the area in which they will be located;
- be reversible so that the land can easily return to farming, forestry, conservation, or other preferred rural uses;
- be suitable for existing rural roads and result in little discernible difference in traffic patterns;
- generate little demand for fire and rescue and police service;
- be able to operate without the need for public water and sewer;
- be sustainable with available groundwater; and
- be consistent with other Rural Area policies.

Most importantly, the success of the use should be related to its rural location. For example, a farm winery where most of the grapes are grown onsite is a Rural Area use. A standalone wine store that sells wines from all over the world is a commercial use that belongs in the Development Areas. A department store distribution center located near an interstate interchange should be in the Development Areas, but a storage and distribution facility for locally produced agricultural products could be located in the Rural Area.

Performance standards will be needed for any new uses to ensure that the size, scale, and location of the new commercial uses recommended for the Rural Area are appropriate. It is of prime importance that the appearance and function of new uses blend and not detract from the key features of the Rural Area. New uses should not overwhelm an area in terms of their function or visibility.