

Rural Lands Designation Description	
1. Basic Description	Rural Lands are areas containing farms, forests and scattered houses, exclusively outside of the Primary Service Area, 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.
2. Recommended Uses	<p>Appropriate primary uses include agricultural and forestal activities, together with certain recreational 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, a few of the smaller 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, in accordance with the Development Standards. These uses should be located in a manner that minimizes effects on agricultural and forestal activities, and located where public services and facilities, especially roads, can adequately accommodate them.</p>
3. Recommended Density	<p>Rural residential uses associated with legitimate agricultural and forestal activities are appropriate when they are at a very low density and pattern, <i>significantly lower than currently permitted and at a density of no more than three acres per unit to reflect the current zoning ordinance</i>. Lower overall gross densities are desirable to achieve a rural character. Soils must be suitable for individual waste disposal systems.</p> <p>Residential developments not related to agricultural or forestal uses are only appropriate when they meet the Rural Lands Development Standards and minimize adverse impacts on rural lands, in particular its rural character and the soils more suited for agriculture.</p> <p>In terms of the desired scale of rural land developments, very low density development, <i>significantly lower than currently permitted</i>, or rural clusters on a small scale which meet the design guidelines of the Rural Lands Development Standards <i>are encouraged</i> while large concentrations of residential development are <i>strongly discouraged</i> as such subdivisions interrupt rural qualities and significantly increase the demand for urban services and transportation facilities.</p>
Rural Lands Development Standards	
1. Use and Character Compatibility	<p>a) Uses in Rural Lands should preserve the natural, wooded, and rural character of the County. Particular attention should be given to the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. locating structures and uses outside of sensitive areas</li> <li>ii. maintaining existing topography, vegetation, trees, and tree lines to the maximum extent possible, especially along roads and between uses</li> <li>iii. discouraging development on farmland, open fields and scenic roadside vistas</li> <li>iv. encouraging enhanced landscaping to screen developments located in open fields using a natural appearance or one that resembles traditional hedgerows and windbreaks</li> <li>v. locating new roads so that they follow existing contours and old roadway corridors whenever feasible</li> <li>vi. limiting the height of structures to an elevation below the height of surrounding mature trees</li> <li>vii. minimizing the number of street and driveway intersections along the main road by providing common driveways and interconnection of developments</li> <li>viii. utilizing lighting only where necessary and in a manner that eliminates glare and brightness</li> </ol> <p>b) Site non-agricultural/non-forestal uses in areas designated Rural Lands so that they minimize impacts or do not disturb agricultural/forestal uses, open fields, and important agricultural/forestal soils and resources.</p> <p>c) Encourage the preservation and reuse of existing agricultural structures such as barns, silos and houses.</p>
2. Rural Residential Clusters	<p>If built, rural clusters should develop with the following guidelines:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Minimize the impact of residential development by preserving a substantial amount (at least two-thirds) of the site in large undivided blocks of land for permanent open space.</li> <li>b) 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; roadway buffers; and preservation of scenic views.</li> <li>c) 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>d) The open space should be placed in a conservation easement or the equivalent to ensure that the land will remain undeveloped.</li> <li>e) 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>