

Page County, Virginia

# **COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

## **VOLUME I: VISION**

(PREPARED BY PAGE COUNTY)



Adopted by the Page County Board of Supervisors

April 21, 2020

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## **PART I - INTRODUCTION**

### **Chapter 1: Introduction**

Page County is a community we can be proud of, home to valuable farmland, world-renowned natural features, abundant open space and small communities with character, where citizens

value an accessible transportation network, quality infrastructure and services and the protection of individual rights.

Page County's vision for the future is to promote an environment conducive to maintaining a rural quality of life, which enhances tourism and agriculture and protects natural and cultural assets while encouraging compatible business and residential growth to provide a higher standard of living for its citizens.

Recognizing the need to ensure that growth and development supports this vision and have a positive fiscal impact on the community, Page County adopted a comprehensive plan in 2007 to guide growth and development decisions. While the 2007 Plan assessed existing conditions and opportunities in the community and set forth various goals and objectives, the County realized that a specific plan implementation program would be necessary in order to achieve these goals. To that end, the County retained the firm of Planning Works and Chandler Planning. The updated Comprehensive Plan, designed by Planning Works and Chandler Planning from late-2007 to mid-2008, includes new and updated goals, policies and strategies from the 2007 Plan and provides Page County with a comprehensive, coordinated growth management plan approach.

## 1.1 Planning Context

Page County has taken steps to ensure vital stakeholders provided real input into the planning process. Based upon extensive community input into the planning process, the view of the future expressed in the Comprehensive Plan is shaped by local community values, ideals and hopes about the best management and use of the community's resources.

The Plan uses text, maps and diagrams to establish policies and programs that the County may use to address the many physical, economic and social issues facing the community. The Comprehensive Plan is general in nature. It designates the approximate location, character and extent of each feature shown and indicates where existing lands and facilities are proposed to be extended, widened, removed, relocated, vacated, narrowed, abandoned or changed in use. Thus, the Plan is a tool for managing community change to achieve the desired quality of life. It is a "vision" document that will be achieved through supportive regulations.

Recent growth trends have become cause for concern in Page County. Much of the recent growth is located within unincorporated areas and portions of the County that are valuable for agricultural uses. By shifting urban and suburban service demands to these areas that lack adequate services and facilities, growth threatens to create negative fiscal impacts. This growth also negatively impacts the character of urban and rural areas. Through this Plan, the County will develop a coordinated growth management program for all jurisdictions to promote efficient

use of valuable infrastructure, minimize the cost of new infrastructure and facilities, and prevent unnecessary loss of the surrounding open space and agricultural land. While allowing appropriate development opportunities in outlying areas, this Plan seeks to promote development and economic growth in areas that can be effectively and efficiently served by public facilities and utilities.

## 1.2 What Is In the Plan?

This Plan is set forth in three parts:

### **Volume I: Vision Volume**

**Part I** is the Introduction, laying out the purpose and role for the Comprehensive Plan, and identifying community perspective and vision.

**Part II** contains Goals, Policies and Implementation Strategies. It is an Implementation Element that includes detailed implementation strategies that have been prioritized to reflect the community's most urgent goals and policies. This section also establishes the basis upon which growth management is based by identifying growth tiers and compatible future land uses. It also defines public and private responsibilities for the enhancement of the built environment, including issues related to providing facilities and services in Community Service Areas and protecting agricultural uses and critical environmental resources.

### **Volume II: Character Volume**

**Part III** is the Community Assessment, which explains the existing conditions, opportunities and needs in the community.

## 1.3 Why Plan?

Successful communities do not just happen; they must be continually shaped and guided. A community must actively manage its growth and respond to changing circumstances if it is to continue to meet the needs of its residents and retain the quality of life that initially attracted those residents to the community. Page County recognizes the importance of planning for the future.

This Comprehensive Plan, once adopted and applied consistently, will strengthen the partnerships between Page County and its incorporated municipalities. It will also strengthen partnerships between the public and private sectors. These partnerships can achieve more for both parties than either acting alone. An effective comprehensive plan should create a "win/win" situation for those involved. It should address existing and new neighborhoods,

economic development, open space conservation, fiscal integrity, and an enhanced quality of life.

## 1.4 Purpose and Background

Public-private partnerships are important to the planning process. Page County recognizes the vital role that private development plays in shaping the community's future. Therefore, the Comprehensive Plan coordinates the orderly provision of public facilities with public and private development activities in a manner that is consistent with the fiscal resources of the County. Public and private investment in public facilities will ensure that there are adequate streets, utilities and parks to serve new growth at adopted levels of service. Land use policies will be implemented through the County's development regulations, capital improvement plans and intergovernmental agreements and partnerships with each of the Towns in Page County.

The Comprehensive Plan is part of an ongoing process to prepare the community for growth and change. The current planning process identifies emerging trends and changing conditions in Page County, identifies reasonable growth and infrastructure extension areas adjacent to incorporated areas, and improves the ability of service providers to provide public facilities for new development occurring at the edges of the Towns. The Plan also identifies growth trends, existing and projected infrastructure deficiencies and needs and provides the factual framework to analyze alternative growth strategies.

The foundation for the Comprehensive Plan is that the County and Towns will work together to define growth and infrastructure extension areas, identified as community service areas ("CSAs"). Together, the County and Towns will define future service areas and Growth Tiers. They will target and leverage County and Town funding to these priority growth areas (identified as Primary and Secondary Community Service Areas on the Future Land Use Map). CSAs will provide the intergovernmental linkage between Capital Improvement Plans, development and annexation.

The development of Community Service Areas forms the basis for many of the Plan's goals, policies and implementation tools. Decision-makers will be able to guide the location, type, intensity, timing and character of development. This will allow them to support the projected population and employment growth, protect scarce resources, improve the quality of life for residents and help providers plan and budget for major public facility expenditures. The Comprehensive Plan incorporates the following concepts, identified during the planning processes:

- Improve the physical environment of the County for human activities and the protection of natural resources;
- Focus growth and expansion near existing infrastructure or where infrastructure can be efficiently extended;
- Require appropriate densities and levels of services in the different Growth Tiers and CSAs;
- Ensure that long-range impacts of short-range actions are considered;
- Promote intergovernmental coordination and political cooperation when planning and providing public facilities and when reviewing development proposals in the CSAs;
- Encourage enhanced and coordinated development design to promote compatible transitions between uses in the CSAs;
- Facilitate the fair application of development policies;
- Establish common design themes and development standards in each CSA based on the respective Town's standards and preferences;
- Foster a healthy, stable and vigorous local economy that can compete regionally and nationally;
- Protect transportation corridors, preserve adequate rights-of-way and establish design and access standards to help the unincorporated areas plan for projected development; and
- Protect the public health, safety and welfare and promote the common good.

The planning process balances competing interests and objectives. Private costs and benefits are weighed against public costs and benefits. ***Planning is forethought in action*** – effective plans guide decision-makers as they balance short-term interests of today with long-term considerations for the future.

## **1.5 Who Implements the Comprehensive Plan?**

The policies and strategies of the Plan must be implemented in a timely manner in order to ensure that the vision of the Comprehensive Plan becomes a reality. Who should implement the goals, policies and strategies? It should be a joint effort of the County Administrator, Page County department heads, the Planning Commission and the County Board of Supervisors. The Implementation chapter identifies and prioritizes strategies to ensure that the vision becomes a reality. The strategies matrix establishes priorities for public action and also guides private decision-makers.

In developing the Update, the most important item is assuring that the community has ownership in the product. Page County has taken steps to ensure vital stakeholders provided real input into the planning process. Development of this Plan was guided by County staff and an Advisory Committee. The Advisory Committee members were drawn from numerous stakeholder groups and provided a broad range of expertise.

## **1.6 How Should the Comprehensive Plan Be Used?**

The Plan is a guide to action. It is not, itself, an implementation tool. By ensuring that individual actions are consistent with the goals, objectives and policies of the Comprehensive Plan, the County can achieve its vision. The Plan guides the preparation of detailed facility master plans and capital improvement programs. The Plan should be amended when conditions within the County change significantly to ensure that it continues to meet the needs of County businesses and residents.

The Plan will coordinate with other jurisdictions. Many problems faced by local governments are regional in nature, including issues such as population growth, environmental preservation, growth patterns, and the adequacy of public facilities and services. This Update will strongly support partnerships between Page County, its Towns and other service providers. These partnerships should focus on coordinated growth management and service provision strategies.

In other communities, lack of intergovernmental coordination has resulted in the loss of population and economic development. Such losses undermine economic stability and reduce public facility and service efficiencies, thereby making it more costly for all County residents. This makes the County less attractive for major economic development that would benefit the entire planning area and the region. These negative consequences can be avoided by: coordinated comprehensive planning, the adoption and implementation of key growth management goals, objectives and policies, and sustained monitoring of development over the planning period.

## 1.7 Making the Plan Real

The Plan is focused on using three primary tools to manage growth in unincorporated areas: Growth Tiers, Community Service Areas and Future Land Uses. The most significant change is the designation of growth tiers. Page County has a wide variety of existing communities and development patterns, which have been grouped into broad development areas, or tiers. This allows similar policies and programs to be used in similar areas, while distinguishing different areas and using special policies to address their growth.

***Incorporated Areas Tier*** - To accommodate the most dense residential and intensive non-residential development in the County.

***Community Service Area Tiers (Primary and Secondary)*** - To prepare for future urban and suburban development, facilitate logical expansions of municipal boundaries and rational extensions of facilities and to contain intensive development patterns to defined (current and future) public facility service areas and preserve a rural lifestyle in the remainder of the County.

***Agricultural Protection Tier*** - To protect (to keep from being damaged or lost) agricultural uses and preserve the rural lifestyle and sense of community that has long defined Page County.

***Environmental Preservation Tier*** - To preserve (to keep or maintain intact) and protect sensitive environmental lands, valuable open space and forests and steep slopes (25% grade or greater).

***The National Park / Forest Tier*** - To preserve and protect National Parks and Forests.

Future land uses are identified, generally, for each growth tier, as required by Virginia Statute. Page County is not establishing a parcel-based future land use program. It is establishing a growth management-based perspective that identifies a range of potential future land uses. The range of uses, consistent with the intent and purpose for each tier, is based on the need for, and ability to provide and fund, necessary public facilities and services. Land use policies will be implemented through the County's development regulations, capital improvement plans and intergovernmental agreements and partnerships with each of the Towns in Page County.

The Plan is part of an ongoing process and requires ongoing action to translate a vision to a reality. Success is achieved through incremental actions and decisions about specific development projects. Because the Plan does not carry the force of law, the County must achieve Plan policies through a variety of actions or tools, referred to as 'strategies.' Some of the key implementation tools that likely will have the most significant impacts include:

- Developing a Unified Development Code (UDC) is the most important tool for Plan implementation. A UDC combines all of the County’s land development regulations, including zoning, subdivision, design and sign standards into one document. It is a unified, comprehensive and coordinated ordinance designed to avoid overlapping, conflicting, or inconsistent ordinance. UDCs permit land use regulation control to be administered more efficiently because decision-makers become more familiar with the land use planning process (from platting to certificate of occupancy) as a complete set of standards and guidelines, all covered in one ordinance. This Plan recommends that the County replace its existing collection of zoning and subdivision regulations with coordinated regulatory provisions in a UDC. The UDC would promote Plan consistency and ensure that incremental actions on development requests support the County’s Vision Volume goals, policies and recommendations.
- The use of Intergovernmental Agreements (IGAs) between the County and each Town will establish coordinated planning, development review processes and development standards in Community Service Areas.
- Coordinating County and Town expenditures, capital improvement plans (CIPs) and private investment is cost-effective and an efficient allocation of resources. The manner in which facilities and services are provided and funded affect all taxpayers.

## **1.8 The Role for Smart Planning**

“Smart Growth” is the management of growth in a community through fiscally sound, environmentally responsible means. Among other components, this means efficient provision of infrastructure and a greater emphasis on the mix of uses, transportation options and environmental sensitivity. Smart growth cannot be achieved through the use of a single magic tool that accomplishes all of the community’s objectives, but is achieved through the use of an integrated approach that uses carefully chosen tools calibrated to the County’s needs and ability to implement specific programs.

"Smart Growth" is the opposite of sprawl. "Sprawl" refers to unplanned, single use, auto dependent development built without regard to availability of infrastructure, facilities and services. Unplanned growth can have extensive negative impacts, such as causing more growth in areas that are unsuitable due to environmental constraints. It can create traffic congestion and overcrowded schools. If unplanned, low-density development prevents the orderly growth of urban development bordering the existing urban center and can cause long-term fiscal stress for a jurisdiction. New growth should be planned to create positive fiscal impacts for the County, and should not burden existing residents with higher taxes to pay for infrastructure that serves new residents.

Smart Growth channels growth into compact and sustainable development patterns, within areas already served with infrastructure, or in areas where infrastructure provision is planned and included in a capital improvement plan (CIP). Smart growth does not seek to change the character of the community, but instead builds on the community's existing characteristics and supports amenities that improve the quality of life for residents. Smart Growth is a framework for achieving Page County's vision for the future. Page County's Comprehensive Plan will:

- Require the cost-effective provision of facilities and services;
- Establish the relationship between future growth, public facilities, and economic development;
- Establish baseline standards with which the impact of future development proposals may be evaluated;
- Maintain adequate public facilities and services, to serve existing and new development, including facility extension and fiscal and revenue-raising policies;
- Designate preferred growth/economic development areas and identify appropriate incentives; and
- Make recommendations to develop, adopt and implement growth management techniques, to amend and revise County regulations, plans, and programs, and to develop a prioritized capital facilities program that address existing and future needs based on growth projections, levels of service and preferred growth alternatives.

## 1.9 Vision

*Page County is a community we can be proud of, home to valuable farmland, world-renowned natural features, communities with character, a vibrant economy and equitable government. Planning for the future will help achieve what we value:*

*Protected agricultural lands;*

*A pristine environment;*

*Livable, attractive communities;*  
*The preservation of open space;*  
*Quality infrastructure and services;*  
*An accessible transportation network;*  
*Protection of individual rights; and*  
*An enduring inviting, rural character.*

## 1.10 County Challenges

Page County and its Towns will face challenges as we prepare for and respond to growth demands. There are distinct differences among the Growth Tiers, Towns and the Community Service areas that offer a variety of choices for businesses and residents in Page County. While it is generally agreed that the distinctions among the Growth Tiers and CSAs should be supported and encouraged, growth must be coordinated with the provision of public facilities and services (water, sewage, storm water management, parks and roads) and facilities and services provided at appropriate levels of service in a timely, cost-effective manner.

As the population continues to grow in outlying areas, and these areas become “urbanized” and incorporated (land that is governed by a local municipal corporation), demands for land and public facilities and services change the character of once rural areas. Residents are concerned about the long-term impact of these trends on the quality of life within Page County and the larger community. The goals, policies and recommendations of this Plan are essential to address the following challenges facing Page County:

- **The need to prepare for long-term growth.** The relatively low capital costs (no sidewalks, curbs or gutters, limited fire flow, etc.) and maintenance costs (fewer homes and businesses mean fewer trips on rural roads) associated with rural tracts and rural subdivisions create an incentive for low intensity development to sprawl outward. When land is developed at low intensities at the edge of the Towns, it can create a political and physical barrier to future urban and suburban growth, requiring new urban/suburban development to “leapfrog” into rural areas. Physically, the costs of extending urban facilities through suburban subdivisions can be very high. Politically, residents who feel that they live in a rural environment are likely to protest urban intensity development. It is the best interests of the County and Towns to ensure that rural development in CSAs is configured to allow for future urbanization.
- **The need to effectively respond to new growth opportunities and challenges.** Planning process participants recognized that the County and Towns are at a juncture –

that protecting public fiscal resources and private investment can be enhanced through cooperative and coordinated planning and development review. Intergovernmental coordination is based on the idea that ***our problems don't stop at our borders, so neither should our solutions.***

While Towns have the authority to apply zoning and subdivision regulations within their municipal boundaries and the County regulates land in unincorporated areas, a significant amount of development has been occurring in what were recently rural areas. Annexations have increased the size and “reach” of Towns, created land use conflicts between existing and new uses and expanded service areas. Intergovernmental coordination is essential to ensure that the County and Towns will be able to provide and maintain adequate public facilities to support anticipated growth.

Through the use of Growth Tiers and Community Service Areas (CSAs), jurisdictions and service providers can determine what levels of growth they can afford to serve and which areas are best suited for urban, suburban and rural development intensities.

- **The need to protect agriculture.** Page County's abundance of prime agricultural soils will force the County and property owners to make some difficult resource decisions. Though changing growth and changing development patterns are occurring, agriculture continues to play significant roles in the culture and economy of the County and Towns. Residents want to maintain and protect historical cultural links to agriculture.

To ensure that agriculture remains a viable alternative for Page County residents, the County must identify which land should be protected and the most effective protection methods. If it is to be successful, any strategy for agricultural land preservation must balance property owners' development concerns with the public benefits of retaining prime agricultural land. Adopted strategies also must address a variety of factors which influence the viability of a particular tract of farmland, including parcel size, adjacent development patterns, available utilities and land value.

- **The need to minimize traffic congestion from external development and inefficient growth patterns.** Being at the crossroads of opportunity presents advantages as well as challenges. By coordinating their efforts, Page County and its Towns can influence the impact of traffic on the quality of life. Coordinating *roadway segment* improvements and funding with County and Town Comprehensive Plans provides opportunities for *transportation network* improvements and circulation patterns that address congestion, connectivity and accessibility for existing and projected traffic volumes. It also supports integrated planning for CSAs, key intersections and along critical corridors.

- **The need to protect and preserve right-of-way for future roadway needs and fund future roadways.** As the community grows and development occurs, accessibility becomes a critical determinant of land utilization. The Comprehensive Plan can help ensure that the site plan review processes address the need for adequate future rights-of-way. The County and Towns will need to explore all funding options to pay for future transportation needs generated by new development, which may include a percentage of fair share from new development, facilities benefit assessment or development agreements vesting future phased development through contribution of transportation facilities.
- **The need to plan for and provide adequate public facilities.** Extension and funding policies should be consistent with growth policies to ensure that the County and Towns do not foster undesirable growth patterns. Connection and capacity availability fees should be structured so that subsidies for investments in lines and treatment plants are limited to the highest priority development areas consisting of CSAs and urban and suburban tiers identified in capital improvement plans.
- **The need to balance urban growth and environmental integrity.** Sustainability is a simple and appealing concept, but it is difficult to measure. While incremental losses of agricultural lands, open space or habitat rarely have measurable or predictable impacts, the cumulative impact of many decisions over time has more profound effects. This, combined with the fact that developed land is rarely redeveloped as open space, increases the importance of ensuring that adequate land is set aside to maintain the community's environmental integrity, including the ability to incorporate adequate storm water management practices. By protecting the environment, Page County can maintain natural vistas for many years.
- **The need for economic development strategies and incentives to ensure a balanced, vigorous economy.** Through its partnerships with the private sector and the use of available revenue and regulatory programs (such as tax increment financing (TIF), enterprise zones, assessment/benefit districts and development excise fees), Page County and its Towns can successfully manage and direct new development. Working together, the communities can ensure that targeted commercial and industrial lands are adequate to meet future demands and provide for market flexibility. Such planning is essential to maintaining competitive real estate prices and ensuring that property can be assembled in the appropriate size and configuration to serve the needs of end users.
- **The need to develop and encourage attractive gateways and corridors.** Gateways and attractive corridors are important because they provide visitors with an initial

impression of Page County. Over a period of time, community growth encroaching into formerly rural areas and continuing development of businesses and commercial activity at key interchanges have created a hodge-podge of development standards and design elements. Increased attention to high quality design, primarily in CSAs, can enhance each community's appeal to residents, business visitors and tourists and help foster community pride for residents.

- **The need to preserve our environment:** The warming climate is threatening local streams, the diversity of plant and animal life in the forest, and the sustainability of agriculture in the fields. Page County may contribute to state, federal and global efforts to promote efficient energy management and renewable energy sources in order to protect local resources.

Renewable energy sources are important economic and environmental policy discussions affecting many rural communities. Identifying appropriate sites for utility scale renewable energy in Page County is extremely challenging due to the physical characteristics of the landscape and the importance of agriculture and tourism. Smaller utility renewal energy facilities might be a better fit for the county. In all cases, care should be taken to ensure measures such as setbacks, screening, preservation and remediation of soils, and monitoring to avoid disturbing sensitive environmental conditions, cultural and economic resources, and existing land uses on nearby properties are appropriate.

## 1.11 Getting Started - What Do These Terms Mean?

The following terms are used throughout the Plan to convey key concepts:

- **Development.** The physical construction of buildings and/or the preparation of land for non-agricultural uses. Development activities include: subdivision of land; construction or alteration of structures, roads, utilities, and other facilities; installation of septic systems; grading; deposit of refuse, debris, or fill materials; and clearing of natural vegetative cover.
- **Goal.** Description of a desired state of affairs for the community in the future. Goals are the broad public purposes toward which policies and programs are directed. Generally, more than one set of actions (policies) may be needed to achieve each goal. In this Plan, goals are phrased to express the desired results of the Plan; they complete the sentence "Our goal is ...."

- **Policy.** Statements of government intent against which individual actions and decisions are evaluated. Policies typically indicate the agency primarily responsible for implementing the policy.
- **Strategy.** Individual tasks or accomplishments which, taken together, will enable the County to achieve Goals and Policies. Strategies are the basis for implementation of the Plan by identifying and recommending specific courses of action.
- **Growth Tiers.** The grouping of distinctive geographic parts of the county into broad development areas such as an *Agricultural Protection Tier* or *The National Park/Forest Tier*. This allows similar policies and programs to be used in similar areas, while distinguishing the different areas and using special policies to address future growth.
- **Community Service Areas (CSAs).** Growth and infrastructure extension areas in the unincorporated County around each Town and along key corridor segments. CSAs include areas in which urban and suburban development may occur provided that necessary public services are available.

## PART II – IMPLEMENTATION ELEMENT

### Chapter 2: Creating a Growth Management System

One of the initial challenges in updating the Plan was to identify agricultural areas to be protected. It was thought that there would be large areas containing a high percentage of farms that could be protected by preventing more intensive future uses. This was important, economically and culturally, because agriculture is and will continue to define Page County:

- Agriculture is a \$141 million industry.
- There are approximately 545 farms in Page County.
- The average farm size is 131 acres.
- Page County is 4<sup>th</sup> in the State for overall agricultural value.
- Page County is 2<sup>nd</sup> in the State for poultry value.

A review of **Exhibit 1** provides an overview of Page County's historical subdivision practices by identifying the distribution of parcels, countywide. It becomes clear that a comprehensive system to manage growth and development will be critical to reducing the continuing fragmentation of lots, countywide.

Use of 'Growth Tiers' to identify areas of consistency (use, intent and purpose, compatibility) is the foundation of the Page County growth management system. The Growth Tiers concept recognizes that different areas of the County face different needs and require different solutions related to growth and development. Distinct levels of service and funding mechanisms for such services apply in each tier. The tiers are structured to encourage appropriate and discourage inappropriate types of development in each tier.

Nevertheless, while individual geographical or functional areas may need specialized strategies for dealing with growth, they must still be viewed in terms of their interrelationships with other areas and with the community as a whole. The fundamental premise of the tier delineations is that the County can be divided into geographical sub-areas based upon functional distinctions within the growth management system. The delineations of the tier system relate strongly to the goals and objectives to be achieved through the growth management system.

Page County has been divided into six Growth Tiers, described below and shown on the Future Land Use Map in **Exhibit 2**. The tier system structures growth management planning and implementation by geographic areas. It is an extremely useful mechanism that establishes a framework for determining which of many varied techniques should be used to achieve growth management objectives for different areas of the County. Each tier has specific strategies appropriate for the nature and extent of development in that tier.

Exhibit 1: Parcels Map

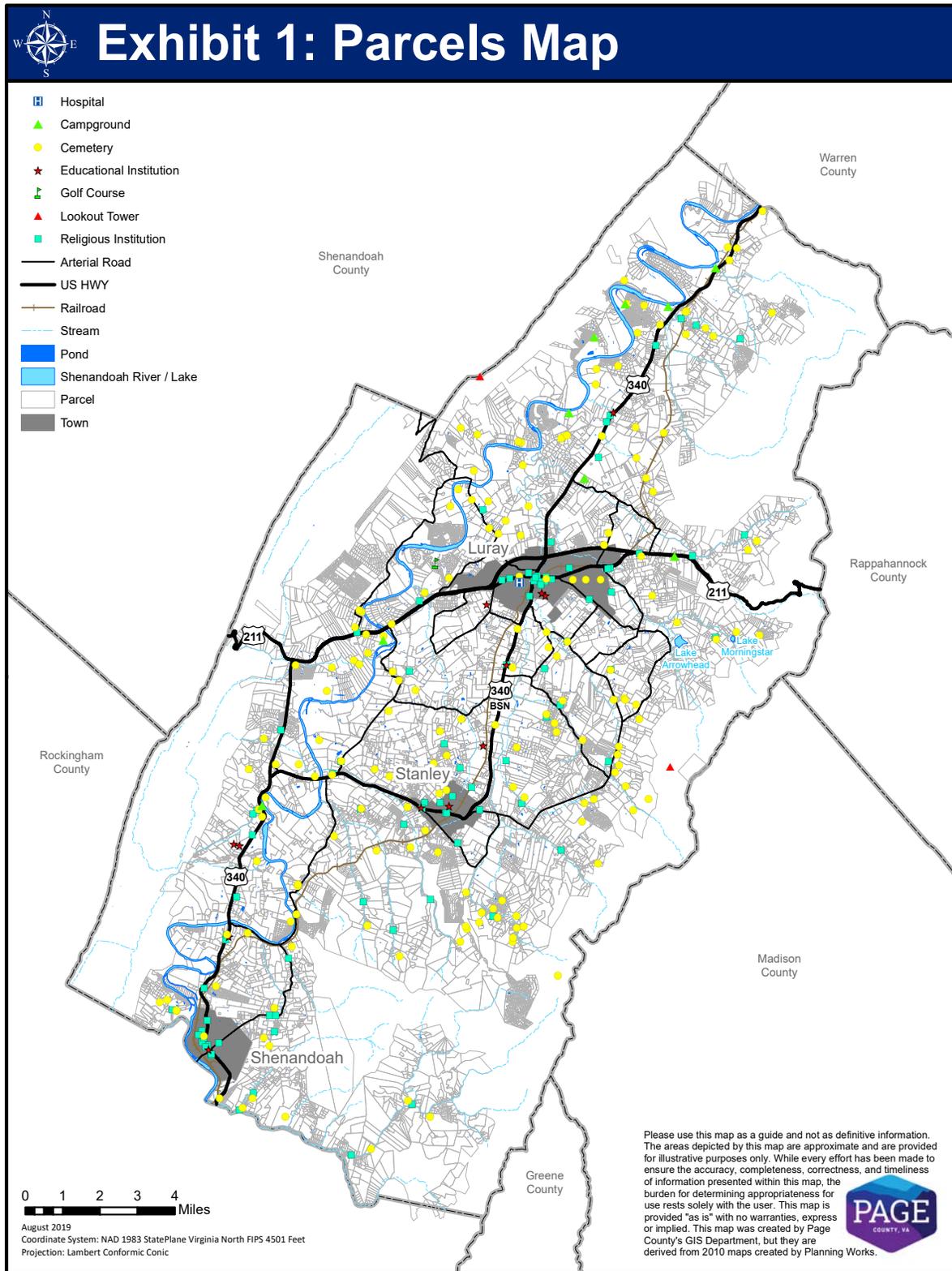
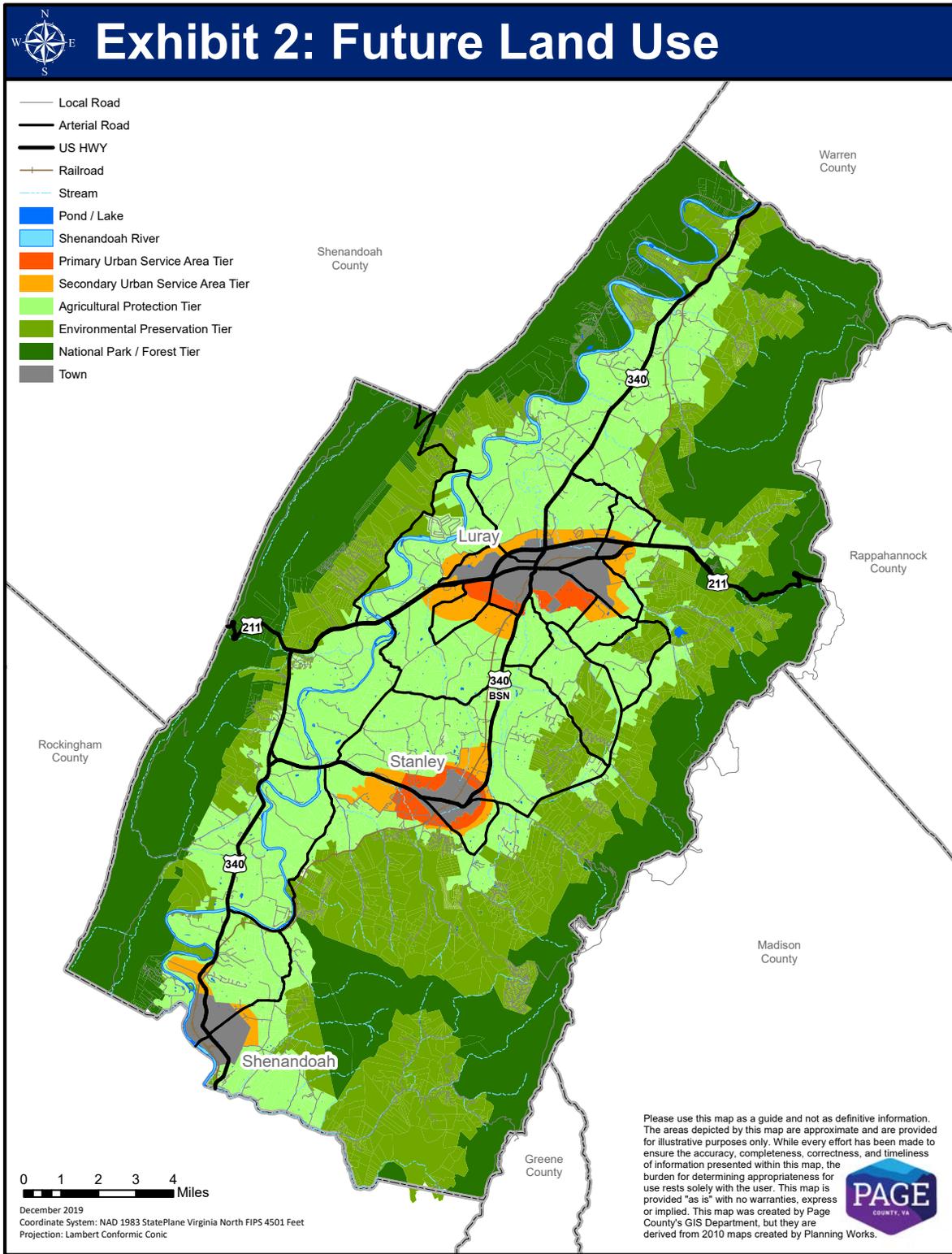
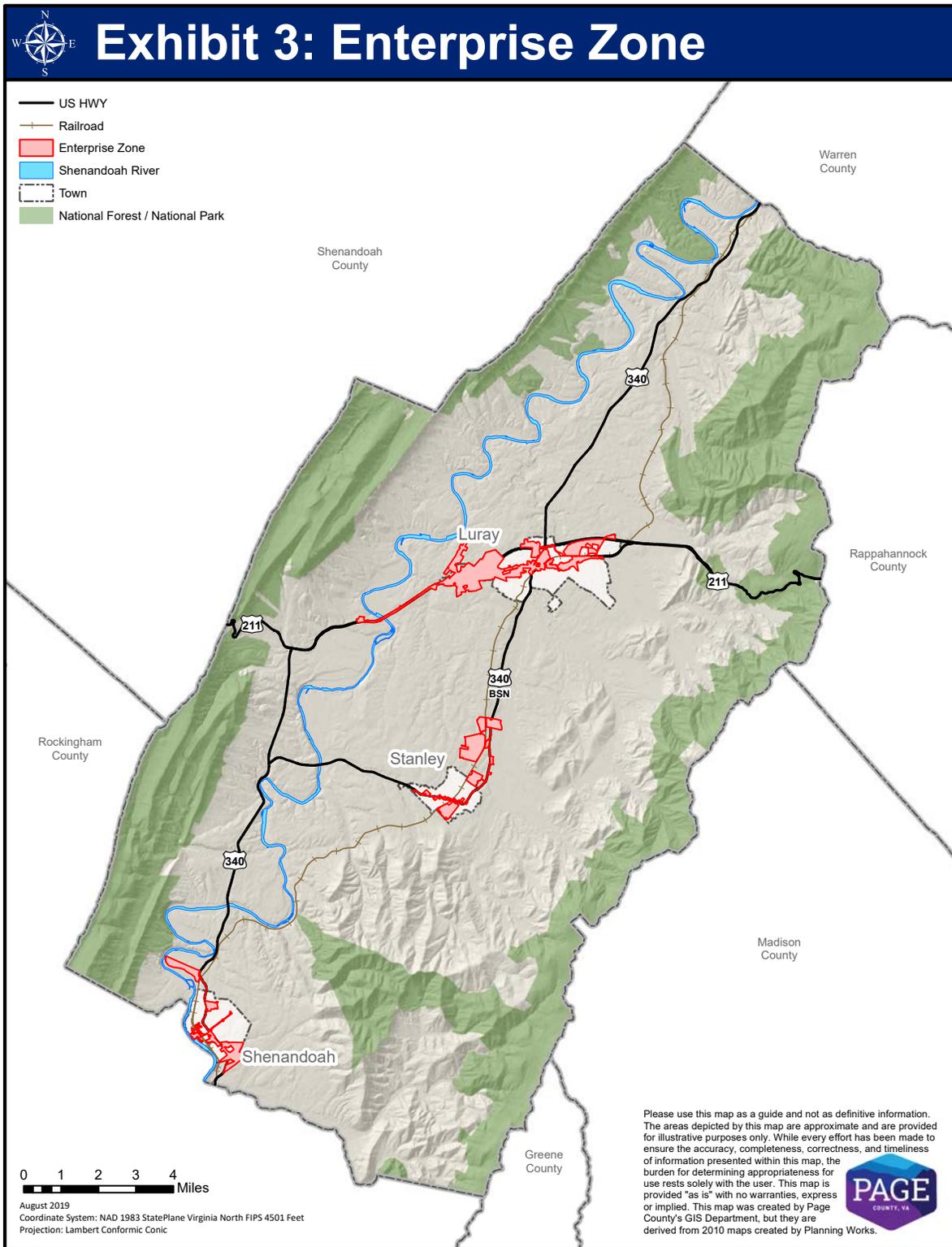


Exhibit 2: Future Land Use



### Exhibit 3: Enterprise Zone Map



## 2.1 The Concept of Growth Tiers

The Growth Tiers defined for Page County may be used for three primary purposes: to establish the proper timing for development; to set the appropriate density and intensity for development; and to establish what uses are appropriate in each tier.

Important features of the Growth Tiers:

- **The Growth Tiers are not zoning designations** -- they are intended to guide local decisions on zoning, subdivision and other land use matters.
- **Growth Tiers reflect a future condition** -- uses described for each tier may be appropriate in 10 to 20 years, but currently may not be appropriate throughout the entirety of the tier due to reasons of compatibility, availability of adequate public facilities, or proximity to services.
- **The Growth Tiers Map is dynamic** -- as justified by changing conditions in the community, the Growth Tiers may change. While map amendments should not be made frequently, periodic adjustments to better achieve community goals will help the community achieve its planning goals.
- **The Future Land Use Map and the text of the Plan are to be used together** -- the text and exhibits describing the Tiers will guide interpretation of the Future Land Use Map.

The Growth Tiers establish the proper timing for development by illustrating the conditions necessary before development may proceed. Because each tier clearly identifies the public facilities required to support new development, the County has a firm foundation for approving or denying development applications when such facilities are not in place. In this way, the tiers may be used to prevent premature development where the County is unable to provide the necessary facilities or services.

The Growth Tiers set the appropriate density and intensity for development by clarifying the land use types that are appropriate in each tier. The Land Use section of the **Exhibit 3** describes the appropriate density/intensity for development. In addition, development should occur at appropriate levels based on the public facilities planned in each tier.

The Growth Tiers, as illustrated in the Future Land Use Map (**Exhibit 2**), the Growth Tiers (**Exhibit 4**) and the Development Guidelines (**Exhibit 5**), do not represent specific zoning districts. Rather, they provide a general overview of future land use patterns, describing the land use types that are appropriate in each area. Zoning changes, infrastructure plans, and other development decisions should be in agreement with the Growth Tiers in order to ensure continuity and efficiency of community growth.

## 2.2 Using Growth Tiers

The Growth Tiers evolved through an analysis of the geographical and environmental characteristics of the County, including analysis of constraints that would affect future development. The factors considered included:

- **Existing development** – areas in proximity to existing facilities and service, including existing Towns and developed areas, were considered appropriate for ongoing urban and suburban development.
- **Prime farmland** – the preservation of the County’s agrarian character and economy was an important goal of this Plan. Identification of the key agricultural areas allowed the tiers to be sensitive to preservation of agriculture. Page County has 29,737 acres of prime farmland as determined by soil conditions and another 38,815 acres of farmland of statewide importance as designated by the Natural Resources Conservation Service. While not all of these lands were included in the Agricultural Protection Tier, that tier was developed to maximize the protection of these lands for ongoing agricultural uses.
- **Floodplain** – a 100-year flood has a 1 percent chance of being equaled or exceeded in any given year. While some areas may escape flooding for many years, generally it is preferable to avoid development within the floodplain to prevent the loss of development investments and hardships associated with property loss and rebuilding. In Page County, there are 7,620 acres within the 100-year floodplain. While these acres were not absolutely excluded from the Community Service Area tiers, these tiers were developed to minimize area within the floodplain.
- **Constrained land** – wetlands and steep slopes all make land difficult to develop. Identification of land with these characteristics allowed the tiers to avoid recommending urban densities/intensities in areas unsuitable for it. The County contains 362 acres of wetlands and 71,294 acres with slopes over 25 percent.

As shown in **Exhibit 5**, the Growth Tiers include an Incorporated Areas Tier, two Community Service Area Tiers, an Agricultural Protection Tier, an Environmental Preservation Tier, and a National Park/Forest Tier. A guide to development types appropriate for each tier is shown in **Exhibit 4**.

- ***Incorporated Areas Tier***

The purpose of the Incorporated Areas Tier is to support urban and suburban development patterns in the Towns. This Growth Tier is based on the incorporated municipal boundaries of the three towns as of the date of adoption of the Page County Comprehensive Plan. New development in this tier will be subject to the plans and

development regulations of each of the towns. Because public water and sewer is generally available throughout each town, this tier should continue to focus on accommodating most of the County's urban and suburban development patterns. This tier is intended for the most intense residential and non-residential development in the County. Full urban services will be required for development in the Incorporated Areas Tier, including approved public water and wastewater systems, urban road improvements, and urban service levels for public safety, fire and emergency medical assistance. Service providers should plan and construct facilities in these areas to meet the needs of development at these urban intensities. Rural development would not be encouraged. Incentives to develop are encouraged in this tier (Enterprise Zone **Exhibit 3**).

- ***Community Service Area Tiers (Primary and Secondary)***

The purpose of the Community Service Area Tiers is to prepare for future urban and suburban development, to facilitate logical expansions of municipal boundaries and rational extensions of facilities, to contain intensive development patterns to defined service areas and to preserve a rural lifestyle in the remainder of the County. These tiers have been designated in the unincorporated County around each Town and along key corridor segments, and include areas in which urban and suburban development intensities may occur provided that necessary public services are available. This tier is acceptable for Urban Development Areas (UDA Exhibit 62, page 148 Volume 2).

The CSAs around the Towns are intended as areas of joint concern for the County and each respective Town. Intergovernmental Agreements (IGAs) will be created to formalize the relationship between the County and each Town in order to promote the cooperation necessary to establish a rational extension of urban and suburban development patterns and necessary public facilities. The County will retain jurisdiction for development review in these tiers, but will apply each Town's respective development standards, design guidelines and level of service standards. These tiers are not intended to promote annexation, but provide assurance to the Towns that urban and suburban development standards will lessen some of the pressure to annex developing lands. Rural development would not be encouraged, but these areas are expected to provide a transition between urban-level development and rural areas.

- ***Agricultural Protection Tier***

The purpose of the Agricultural Protection Tier is to protect agricultural uses and preserve the rural lifestyle and sense of community that has long defined Page County. This tier is intended primarily for very low-density residential development, large lot rural development and agricultural uses. Non-residential uses would serve the needs of residents in the surrounding rural areas and generally be limited to agriculture-related

businesses. Low-density suburban subdivisions and low intensity employment centers may be permitted if access is adequate and the use is compatible with surrounding uses. Levels of service depend on the density/intensity of a development and its location.

- ***Environmental Preservation Tier***

This tier includes land that, because of its environmental characteristics or importance to a regional open space system, should experience little or no development. This tier includes land adjacent to the National Park/Forest tier, 100-year floodplains, significant woodlands, and steep slopes. Development may occur only if it does not affect sensitive environmental features, is not unnecessarily subject to damage from natural hazards, and does not affect valuable open space land. Similarly, the County will strongly discourage the construction of wastewater treatment plants, lift stations, and other potential sources of water pollution upstream of reservoirs and recreational water bodies. Low intensity residential or recreational uses may be acceptable in these areas.

Public services provided in this tier should meet the needs of planned land uses while protecting identified environmental resources. Disruption of natural open space for public services should be minimized.

- ***National Forests Protection Tier***

This tier corresponds to boundaries of Shenandoah National Park and George Washington-Thomas Jefferson National Forest. The purpose is to preserve and protect these important assets. Private holdings in this tier should be subject to Woodland Conservation zoning. Federally owned land in this tier is subject to the rules, regulations, and standards of the National Park and Forest Services.

**Exhibit 4: Growth Tiers**

	<b>Incorporated Areas</b>	<b>Primary Community Service Area Tier</b>	<b>Secondary Community Service Area Tier</b>	<b>Agricultural Protection Tier</b>	<b>Environmental Preservation Tier</b>	<b>National Park / Forest Tier</b>
<b>Purpose</b>	To accommodate the most dense residential and intensive non-residential development in the County.	To prepare for future urban and suburban development, facilitate logical expansions of municipal boundaries and rational extensions of facilities, based on defined public facility service areas, and preserve a rural lifestyle in the remainder of the County.		To protect ( <i>to keep from being damaged or lost</i> ) agricultural uses and preserve the rural lifestyle and sense of community that has long defined Page County.	To preserve ( <i>to keep or maintain intact</i> ) and protect sensitive environmental lands, valuable open space and forests and steep slopes (25% grade or greater).	To preserve and protect National Parks and Forests.
		90% of area for residential growth.  Densities average 3 DUs/acre.  Absorption to occur within 10 years.  *Dwelling Unit	50% to 75% of area for residential growth.  Suburban densities average 1½ DUs/acre.  Absorption to occur within 25 years.			
<b>Location</b>	Corresponds to incorporated boundaries of each Town.	Designated areas in the unincorporated County around each Town, as approved by Town and County, and along key corridor segments.		Areas not in the CSA, Environmental Preservation or National Park/Forest Tiers.	Primarily adjacent to National Park/Forest Tier. Includes significant woodlands and steep slopes.	Consistent with boundaries of Shenandoah National Park and George Washington-Thomas Jefferson National Forest.

	<b>Incorporated Areas</b>	<b>Primary Community Service Area Tier</b>	<b>Secondary Community Service Area Tier</b>	<b>Agricultural Protection Tier</b>	<b>Environmental Preservation Tier</b>	<b>National Park / Forest Tier</b>	
<b>Land Use</b>	<p>Urban and suburban uses as determined by each Town should be permitted.</p> <p>Rural (large lot) development would be discouraged.</p>	<p>Urban and suburban uses permitted based on need and availability of necessary public facilities are available.</p> <p>Transition (buffer) between urban/suburban uses and rural/agricultural uses required.</p>	<p>Rural (large lot) development would not be permitted.</p>	<p>Rural (large lot) development may be permitted.</p>	<p>Intended primarily for large lot rural development and agricultural uses.</p> <p>Non-residential uses would serve the needs of residents in the surrounding ag/rural areas and generally be limited to ag-related businesses.</p> <p>Low-density suburban subdivisions and low intensity employment centers <u>may</u> be permitted if access is adequate and the use is compatible with surrounding ag/rural development.</p>	<p>Development may occur only if it does not affect key environmental and natural resources.</p> <p>Low-density residential or recreational uses may be acceptable in these areas.</p> <p>Disruption of natural open space for public services should be minimized.</p>	<p>No development permitted.</p>

	<b>Incorporated Areas</b>	<b>Primary Community Service Area Tier</b>	<b>Secondary Community Service Area Tier</b>	<b>Agricultural Protection Tier</b>	<b>Environmental Preservation Tier</b>	<b>National Park / Forest Tier</b>
<b>Public Facilities</b>	<p>Water and sewer are generally available. Full urban services should be required for new development.</p>	<p>Water and sewer are generally not available. City most likely provider of urban/suburban services. County’s role to support rational extension policies.</p> <p>Full urban services would be required for new development.</p> <p>No new private water/sewer unless agree to participate in public system when available.</p> <p>New development to be responsible for facility and services costs. Rural residents not to subsidize those costs.</p>		<p>Levels of service (LOS) depend on the density/intensity of a development and location. Generally, a rural LOS throughout Tier.</p>	<p>Public services provided in this tier should meet the needs of planned land uses while protecting the identified environmental resources.</p> <p>The County will strongly discourage the construction of wastewater treatment plants, lift stations, and other potential sources of water pollution upstream of water resources.</p>	<p>No public facilities to be provided.</p>

	<b>Incorporated Areas</b>	<b>Primary Community Service Area Tier</b>	<b>Secondary Community Service Area Tier</b>	<b>Agricultural Protection Tier</b>	<b>Environmental Preservation Tier</b>	<b>National Park / Forest Tier</b>
<b>Jurisdiction</b>	Development subject to the plans and development regulations of each Town.	<p>Intergovernmental Agreements (IGAs) will formalize the relationship between the County and each Town.</p> <p>County will retain jurisdiction for development review, but will apply each Town's respective development standards, design guidelines and level of service standards for urban/suburban development.</p>		Development subject to County plans and development regulations.	Development subject to County plans and development regulations.	Lands subject to rules, regulations and standards of national parks and forest services.

**Exhibit 5: Development Guidelines**

Land Use Type	Use Description	Permitted (P) or Conditional (C) Use			
		Primary CSA	Secondary CSA	Ag Protection	Environmental Preservation
Agriculture	Agricultural uses, such as the growing of crops and raising of livestock, along with very large lot residential uses, such as farmhouses.			P	P
Rural Residential	Rural homes on large lots, sometimes as part of rural subdivisions (a subdivision of only a few lots and very low densities).			P	P
Neighborhood Residential, Low	Subdivisions with large lot sizes, but low densities. The smallest form of a neighborhood.	P	P	C	C
Neighborhood Residential, Moderate	The most common subdivision type, a few homes sharing each acre of land. The size of a traditional neighborhood.	P	P		
Neighborhood Residential, High	Higher density residential development on smaller lots or with more units on each lot. Examples include apartments, townhomes and condominiums.	P	C		
Rural Business	Businesses which are agriculture and natural resource-based, such as co-ops, feed stores, etc.		P	C	C

Land Use Type	Use Description	Permitted (P) or Conditional (C) Use			
		Primary CSA	Secondary CSA	Ag Protection	Environmental Preservation
Neighborhood Business	Retail, office, and services competing for business within a small area, such as a local hardware or variety store, barber shop or café.	P	P		
Regional Business	Large-scale retail, office, and services designed to draw in customers from a large area, such as a Walmart, Target or shopping mall.	P	C		
Business Park / Light Industrial	Planned use with business, office, and/or light industrial uses combined into a single development.	P	C		
Industrial	The manufacturing of products and/or their assembly, often occurring near transportation corridors.	P	C		

### 2.3 Tier Acreage by Community

The total acreage in each tier by community is shown in **Exhibit 6**. Applying a number of acreage adjustments and density factors to the amount of land available for development allows for the calculation of the County’s projected population in 2030.<sup>1</sup> These calculations show a 2030 population of 30,200, an increase of 6,369 persons over the County’s 2005 population. This increase equates to an average annual increase of 0.8 percent.

**Exhibit 6: Tier Acreage by Community**

	<b>Luray</b>	<b>Stanley</b>	<b>Shenandoah</b>	<b>Unincorporated County</b>	<b>Total</b>
Incorporated Area	3,040	1,464	919	0	5,423
Estimated Vacant Land*	1,216	366	230	0	1,812*
Primary Community Service	966	1,092	0	0	2,058
Secondary Community Service	2,915	2,069	602	0	5,586
Agricultural Protection	0	0	0	71,387	71,387
Environmental Preservation	0	0	0	56,009	56,009
National Park/Forest	0	0	0	68,949	68,949

\* Estimated Vacant Land is within the Incorporated Areas.

### 2.4 Land Evaluation Suitability Analysis (LESA)

The Plan recommends that the County establish a Geographic Information Systems (GIS)-based suitability analysis to evaluate the appropriateness of a proposed development for a specific location. The objectives are to ensure that premature conversion of prime agricultural land is prevented and that incompatible intensive (urban or suburban) land uses are not scattered in rural areas. The Land Evaluation (LE) components consider the characteristics and

<sup>1</sup> The acreage adjustments include residential build-out percentages, average dwelling units per acre, persons per dwelling unit, and absorption.

qualities of the natural resources and agricultural lands; the Site Assessment (SA) components consider the appropriateness of the site for the proposed use and the need for public facilities and services. LESA assumes that: (i) scattering non-agricultural uses within an area used primarily for agricultural purpose leads to conflicts between incompatible uses; (ii) non-agricultural uses are presumed to decrease the ability to maintain viable agricultural operations and the services needed for the operations; and (iii) the County's costs to deliver services required by non-agricultural uses will increase and providing services to sprawling non-agricultural uses will increase costs substantially higher.

The recommended LESA program will need to be incorporated into the County's Unified Development Code. It is composed of four elements: farmland evaluation, land use compatibility, site assessment and a public facilities assessment, described below. The recommended LESA would also incorporate an incentive-based approach by rewarding development that supports and furthers County goals with 'bonus' points that could become relevant to offset mitigation efforts or offer greater project flexibility or intensity.

#### **Part I - Farmland Evaluation Factors**

- Prime farmlands
- Size of farm
- On-site agricultural use
- Proximity to agricultural use (percent of perimeter surrounded by farmland)
- Land area used for agriculture within one-mile of the proposed development site (percent of total area)
- Proximity to land zoned for agricultural or woodland conservation use (percent of perimeter surrounded by farmland)
- Land area zoned for agricultural use within one-mile of the proposed development site (percent of total area)

#### **Part II - Land Use Compatibility Factors**

- Adjacent land use that is the same AS THE PROPOSED USE at the time of application (percent of perimeter surrounded by same land use)
- Adjacent zoning that is the same at the time of application (percent of perimeter surrounded by same zoning)
- Land area used for residential use within one mile of the proposed development site (percent of total area at 2, or more, DUs per acre)
- Land area used for non-residential use (except agriculture-related) within one mile of the proposed development site
- Distance to Secondary Community Service Area
- Distance to Primary Community Service Area
- Distance to municipal boundary

**Part III - Site Assessment Factors**

- Environmental considerations (encroachment into areas of woodlands, flood hazards, wetlands, aquifer recharge area, threatened or endangered wildlife habitat)
- Topographic and hillside considerations
- Geologic and drainage considerations (presence of Karst, sinkholes, shallow bedrock, significant drainage)
- Degree to which soils are not suitable for construction (high shrink-swell)
- Degree to which soils are not suitable for septic systems

**Part IV - Public Facilities Assessment Factors**

- Existing availability of community / public sewer
- Planned (public improvements to be completed concurrent with development or, if within 10 yrs, agreement to connect when available) community / public sewer
- Existing availability of a public water system
- Planned (public improvements to be completed concurrent with development or, if within 10 yrs, agreement to connect when available) public water system
- Distance to Primary Highway
- Distance to paved road
- Distance from fire station
- Distance from nearest elementary or secondary school

**Part V – Incentives (Bonus Points)**

- Cluster development
- Conservation subdivision
- Ag/Forestal District
- Excess public improvements (additional right-of-way, oversized water/sewer)
- Recreational amenities provided (park facilities)
- Community amenities provided (community center)
- Mitigation of environmental, historical or archeological impact: Preservation
- Mitigation of environmental, historical or archeological impact: Restoration

The application and outcome of the LESA program is not a 'black box' tool (*i.e.*, enter all the data, let it crunch the numbers and tell the score). Instead, the scores (a total, one for each factor and set of factors) create presumptions that indicate potential outcomes that the deciding body must interpret and apply in making the final decision. These presumptions may include:

- A presumption that agricultural or rural development is most appropriate (and the urban/suburban development is not appropriate) in the proposed location at the current time.
- A presumption that conditions are marginal for the long-term viability of agricultural development. Development approval should be contingent upon satisfying all other criteria and may require special conditions addressing agricultural and environmental protection, infrastructure needs, land use compatibility or other factors.
- A presumption that urban or suburban development is most appropriate (and that agricultural or rural development is not appropriate) in the proposed location at the current time.

### ***Application of the LESA Program***

A preliminary LESA has been developed to provide a consistent, technically defensible system for the evaluation of land development proposals by the County. The factors that have been mapped in order to provide an overview of development suitability and aid in the development review process are included in **Exhibit 7**. Data was obtained from various local, State, Federal and private entities.

### **Exhibit 7: Preliminary LESA Factors**

	<b>Land Evaluation and Suitability Analysis Factor</b>
Factor 1	<p><b>Prime Farmlands</b> Prime farmland is identified by the presence of suitable soil types. Areas with the highest percentage of prime soil types and areas of State-wide importance for agriculture are least suitable for development.</p>
Factor 2	<p><b>Size of Parcel</b> The size of farm or ranch parcels is a standard component of LESA systems commonly used by Counties with rural character. Data on farm parcels specifically was not available, so size in acres was calculated for each parcel. To protect large farms:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parcels over 500 acres have low development suitability</li> <li>• Parcels between 40 and 500 acres have moderate development suitability</li> <li>• Parcels less than 40 acres have high development suitability</li> </ul>
Factor 3	<p><b>Distance to Community Service Area</b> Designated Community Service Areas are used as a proxy for the current or future availability of public water and sewer service. Closer proximity to a Community Service Area makes an area more suitable for development.</p>
Factor 4	<p><b>Distance to Municipal Boundary</b> Land in closest proximity to municipal boundaries is most suitable for development due to the current or future availability of services. County goals and policies support development near to the incorporated areas in order to protect agriculture areas and prevent sprawling development.</p>
Factor 5	<b>Topographic and Hillside Considerations</b>

	<b>Land Evaluation and Suitability Analysis Factor</b>
	Land that is least constrained by the presence of steep slopes is most appropriate for development. A percent slope of greater than 25% is considered prone to slides and requires considerable engineering and excavating to be developed safely.
Factor 6	<b>Geologic and Drainage Considerations</b> The presence of Karst terrain, sinkholes, shallow bedrock and/or significant drainage issues creates potentially hazardous conditions and increases the possibility for water pollution, therefore restricting the potential for development.
Factor 7	<b>Soils Not Suitable for Construction</b> Soil properties affect construction capacity due to their ability to support a building's load and prevent damage due to ground movement over time. The properties that affect the load-supporting capacity include depth to a water table, ponding, flooding, subsidence, linear extensibility, shrink-swell potential, and compressibility.
Factor 8	<b>Soils Not Suitable for Septic Systems</b> Development in areas not suitable for septic systems should be limited unless public sewer is available. Soil characteristics affect septic suitability due to their ability to sustain absorption of the effluent, construction and maintenance of the system, and public health. Soil properties in this factor include: saturated hydraulic conductivity, depth to a water table, ponding, depth to bedrock or a cemented pan, and flooding affect absorption of the effluent. Stones and boulders, ice, and bedrock or a cemented pan interfere with installation.
Factor 9	<b>Distance to Primary Highway</b> The availability and proximity of adequate transportation routes indicates higher development suitability.
Factor 10	<b>Distance from Fire Station</b> The availability and proximity of adequate fire protection indicates higher development suitability.
Factor 11	<b>Distance from Nearest Elementary or Secondary School</b> The availability and proximity of adequate education facilities indicates higher development suitability.

This preliminary LESA is used to determine the appropriateness of proposed development for its geographic location. Land suitability is defined in the following manner:

- **Low Suitability** – There is a presumption that land is not suitable for development. This does not preclude development but requires a showing by the property owner that sufficient conditions exist that should permit development to occur and that on- and off-site concerns attributable to the proposed development can and will be addressed.
- **Moderate Suitability** – There is no presumption the site is either not suitable or suitable for development.
- **High Suitability** – There is a presumption that land is suitable for development, but does not guarantee that a proposed development is appropriate for the location.

The preliminary LESA maps (**Exhibits 7-18**) are intended to aid decision-making by assessing the impact of development on the County's natural, cultural, economic, infrastructure and other community resources. Accurate and relevant data availability permits the County to make informed land use decisions.

Implementation of a LESA should occur through the development of the Unified Development Code, and should include the creation of a composite development suitability map that layers data to provide a comprehensive overview of land use suitability. In developing the LESA as part of the UDC, the County will assign weight to factors based upon their relevance to the County's goals and policies. The LESA should be updated to provide the fullest and most accurate information as expanded and improved datasets become publicly available.

Exhibit 8: Prime Farmlands

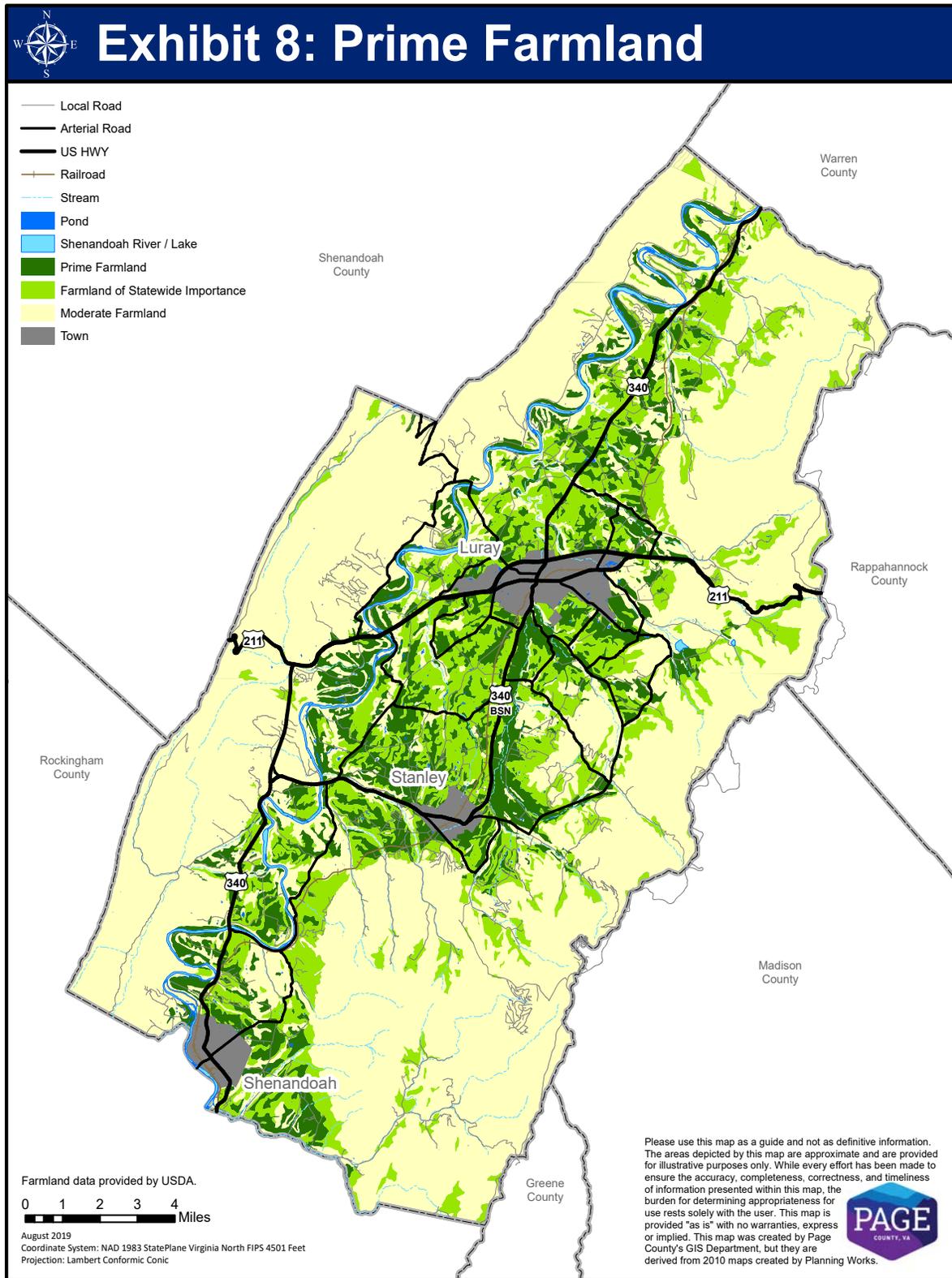


Exhibit 9: Size of Parcel

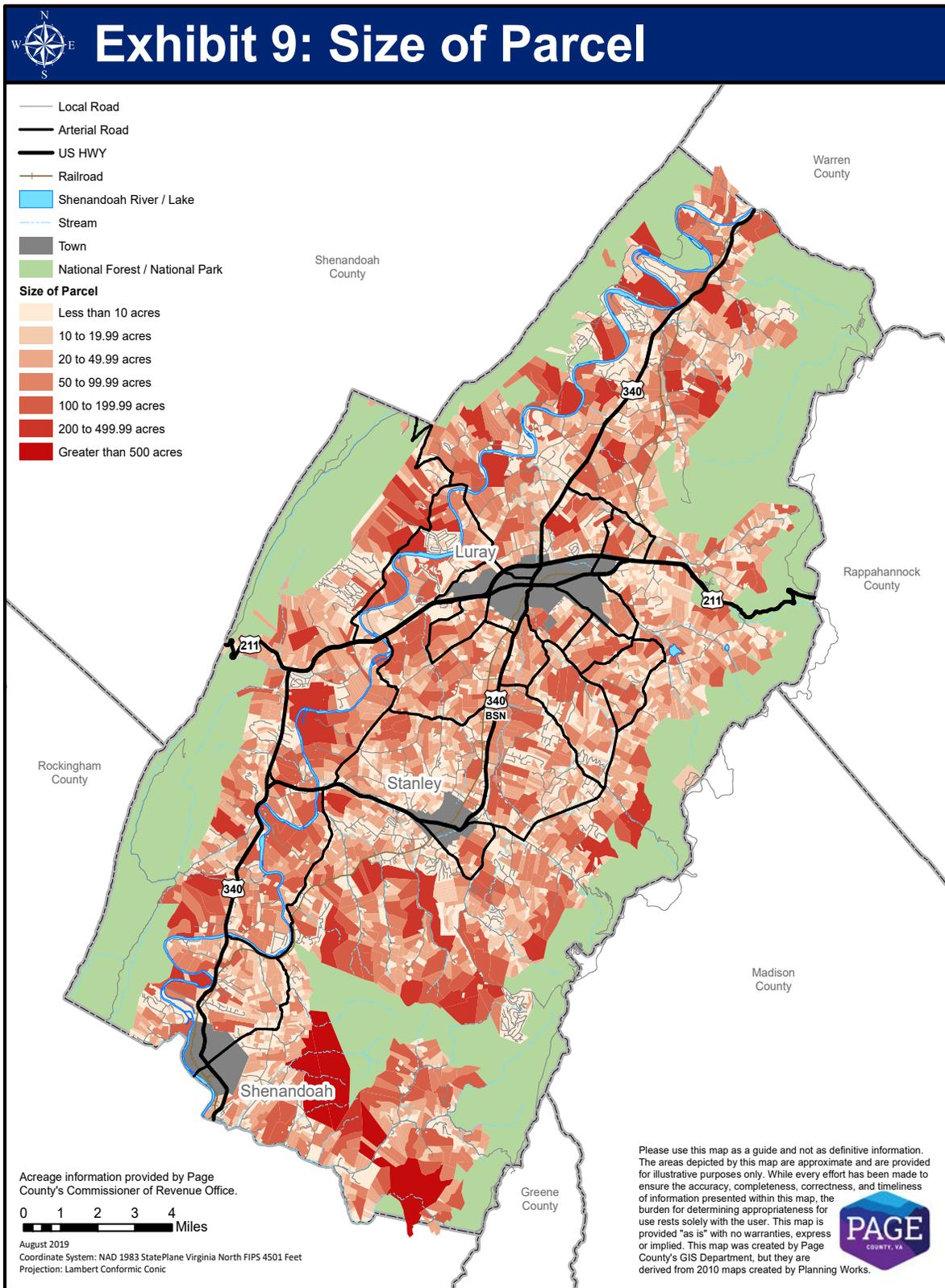


Exhibit 10: Distance to Community Service Area

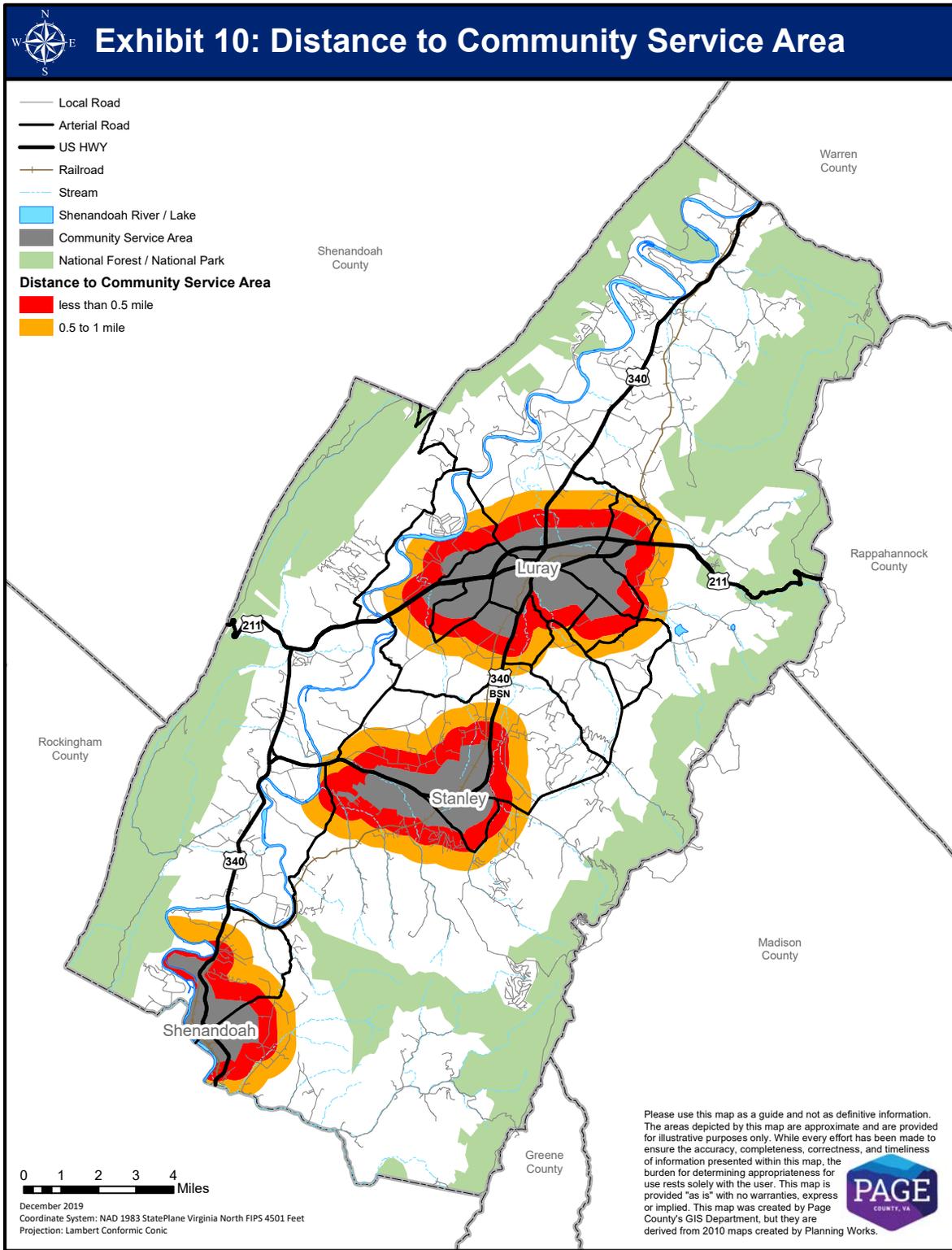


Exhibit 11: Driving Distance to Town Boundary

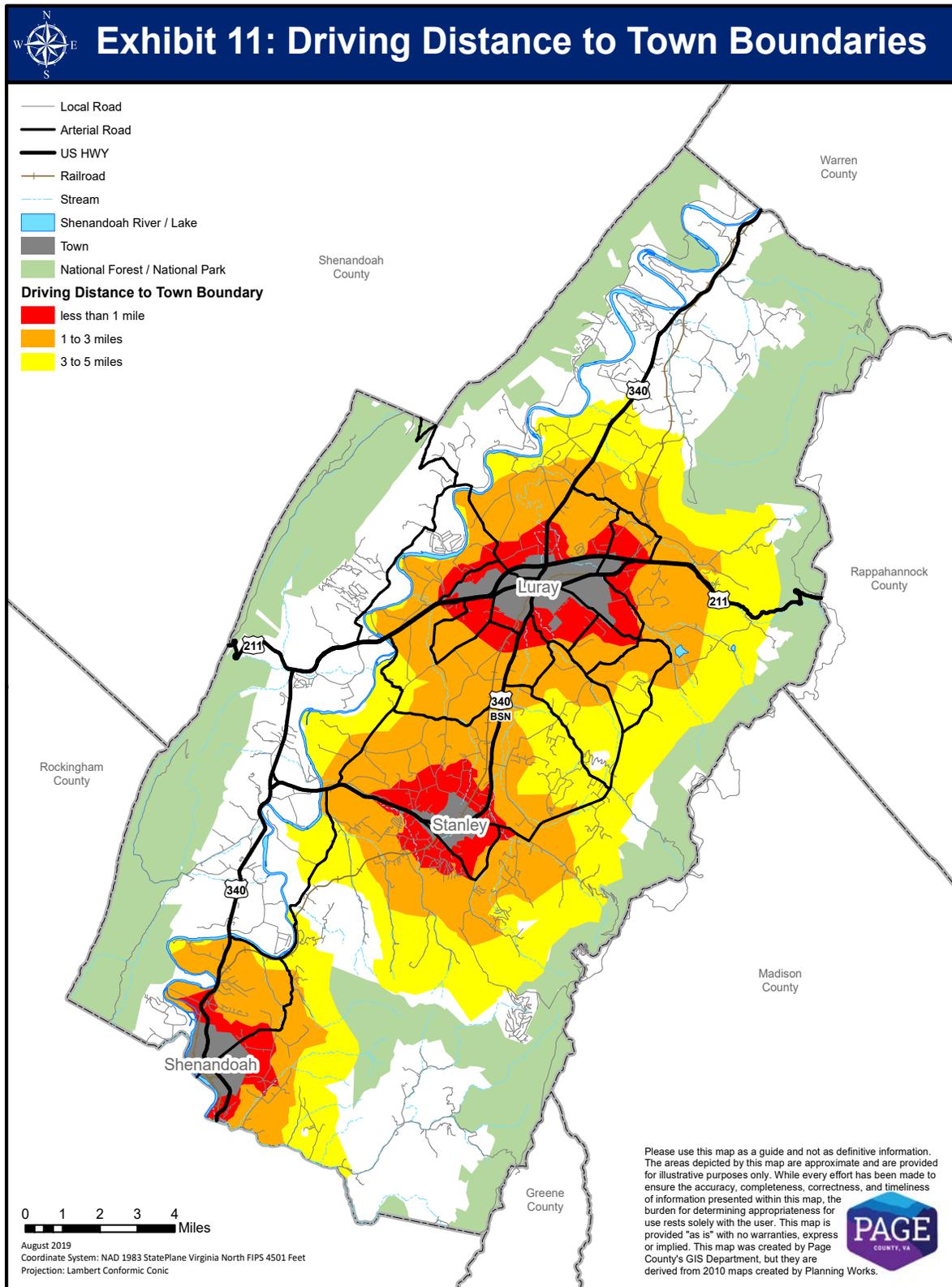


Exhibit 12: Topographic and Hillside Considerations

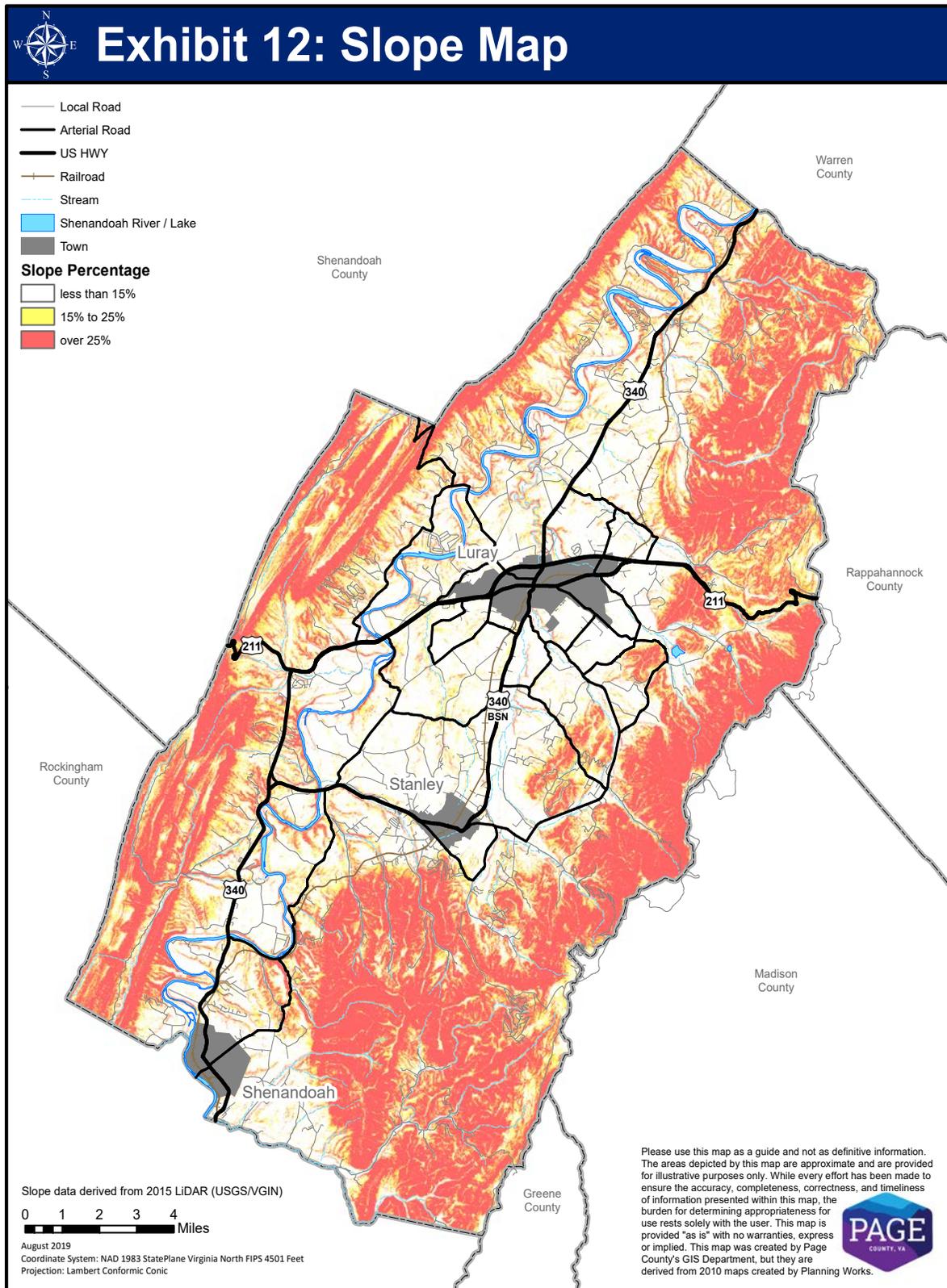


Exhibit 13: Geologic Formations

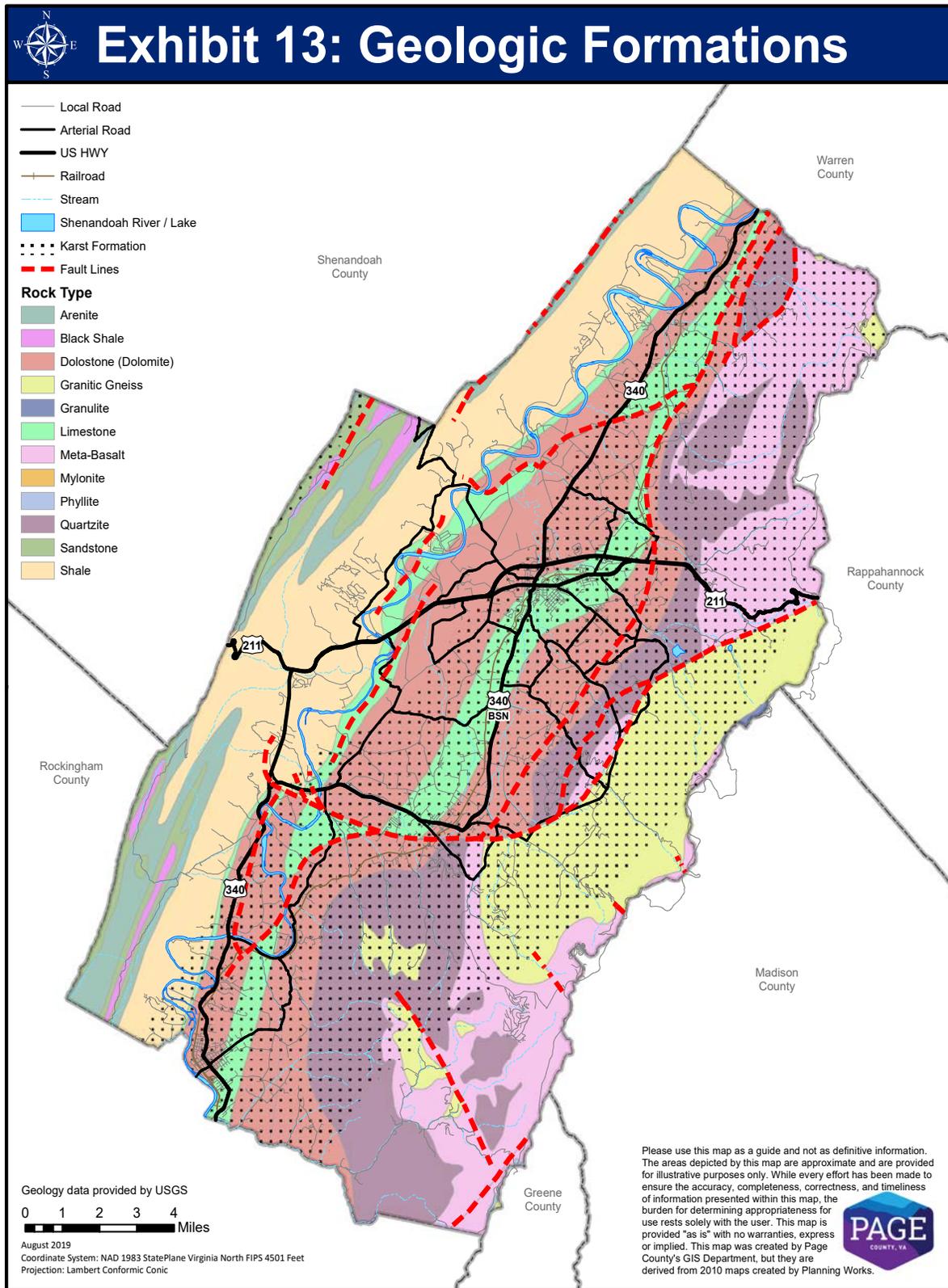
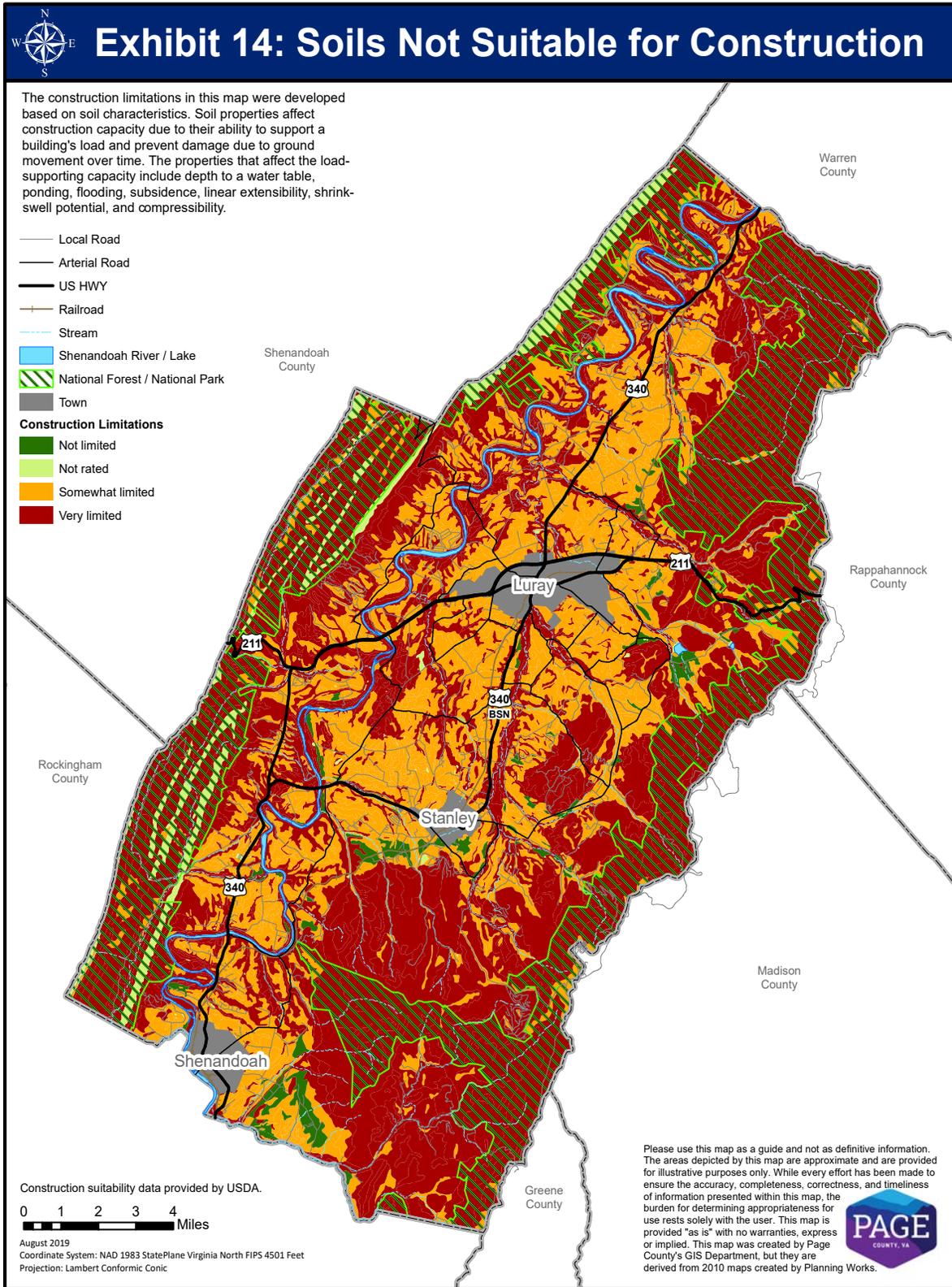


Exhibit 14: Soils Not Suitable for Construction



**Exhibit 15: Soils Not Suitable for Septic Systems**

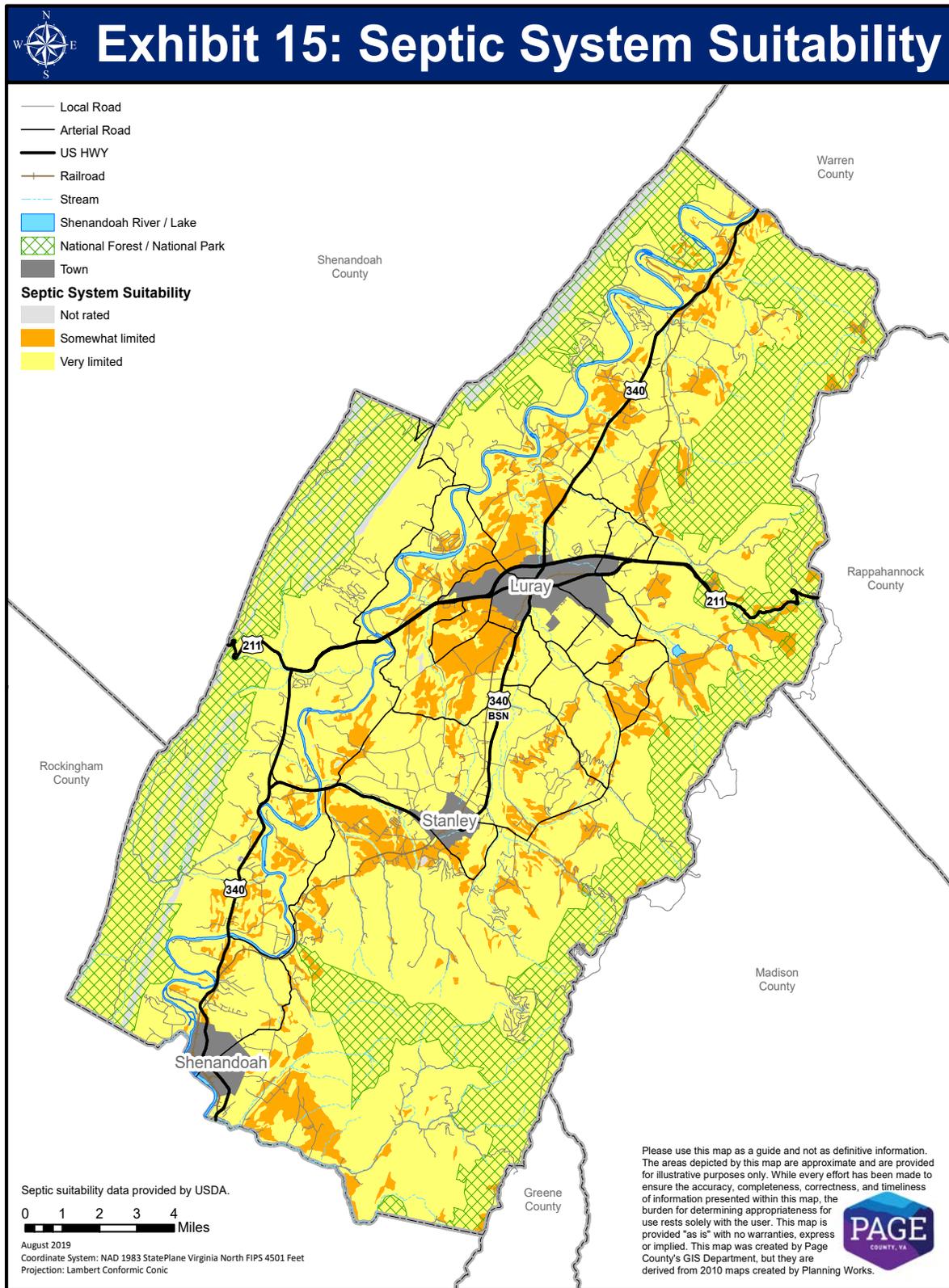


Exhibit 16: Driving Distance to Highways

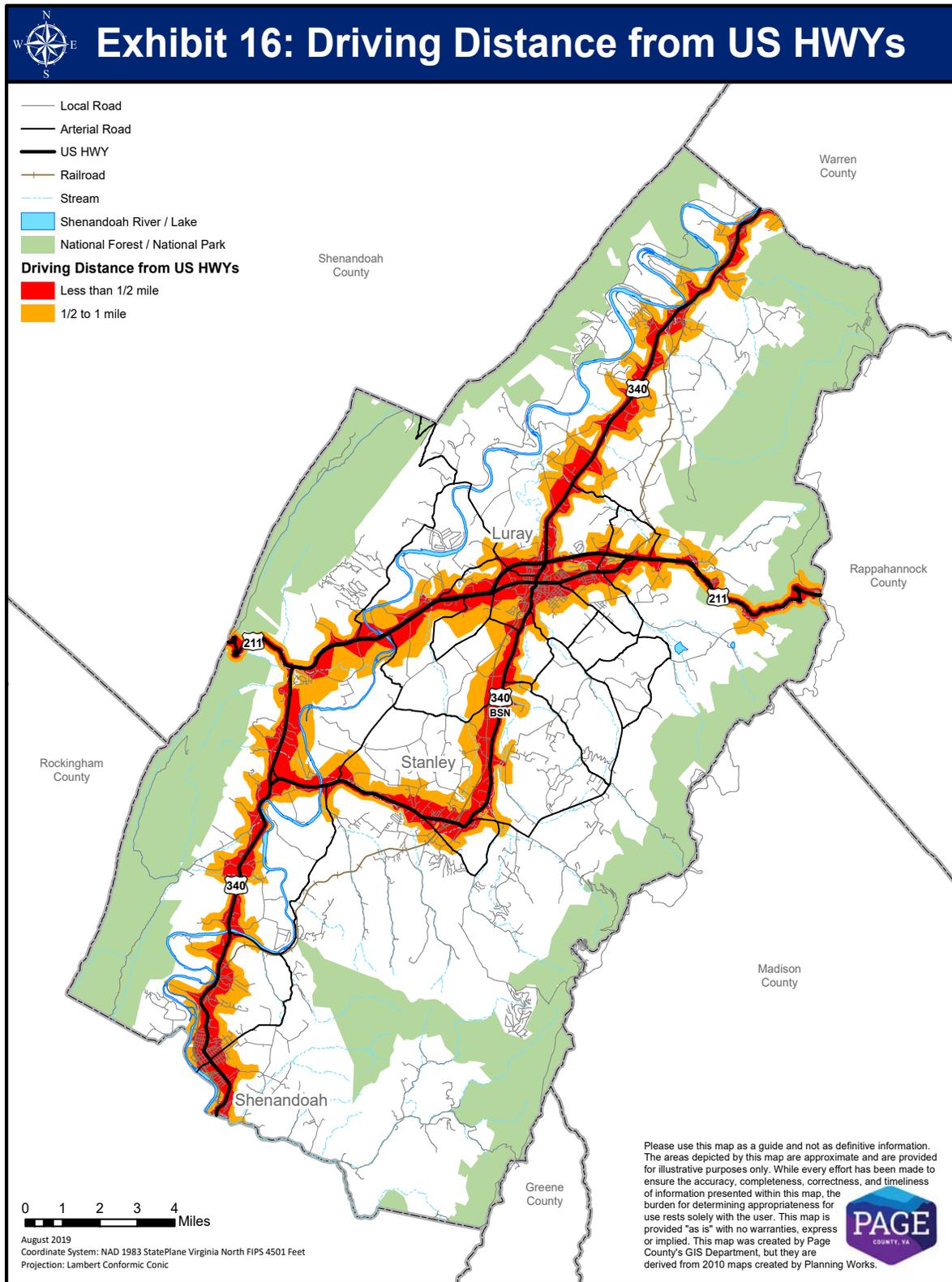


Exhibit 17A: Distance from Fire Station

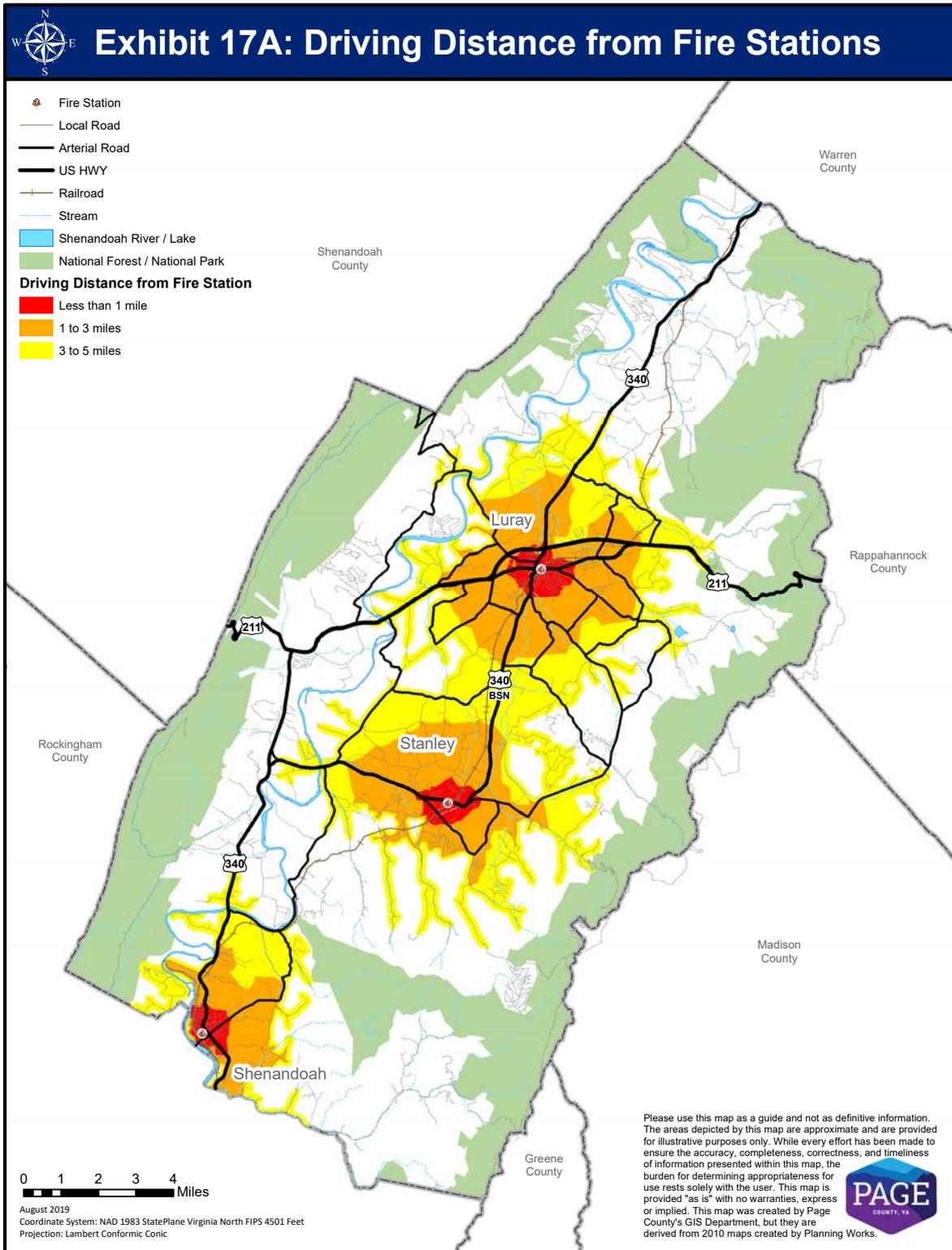


Exhibit 17B: Distance from Rescue Squads

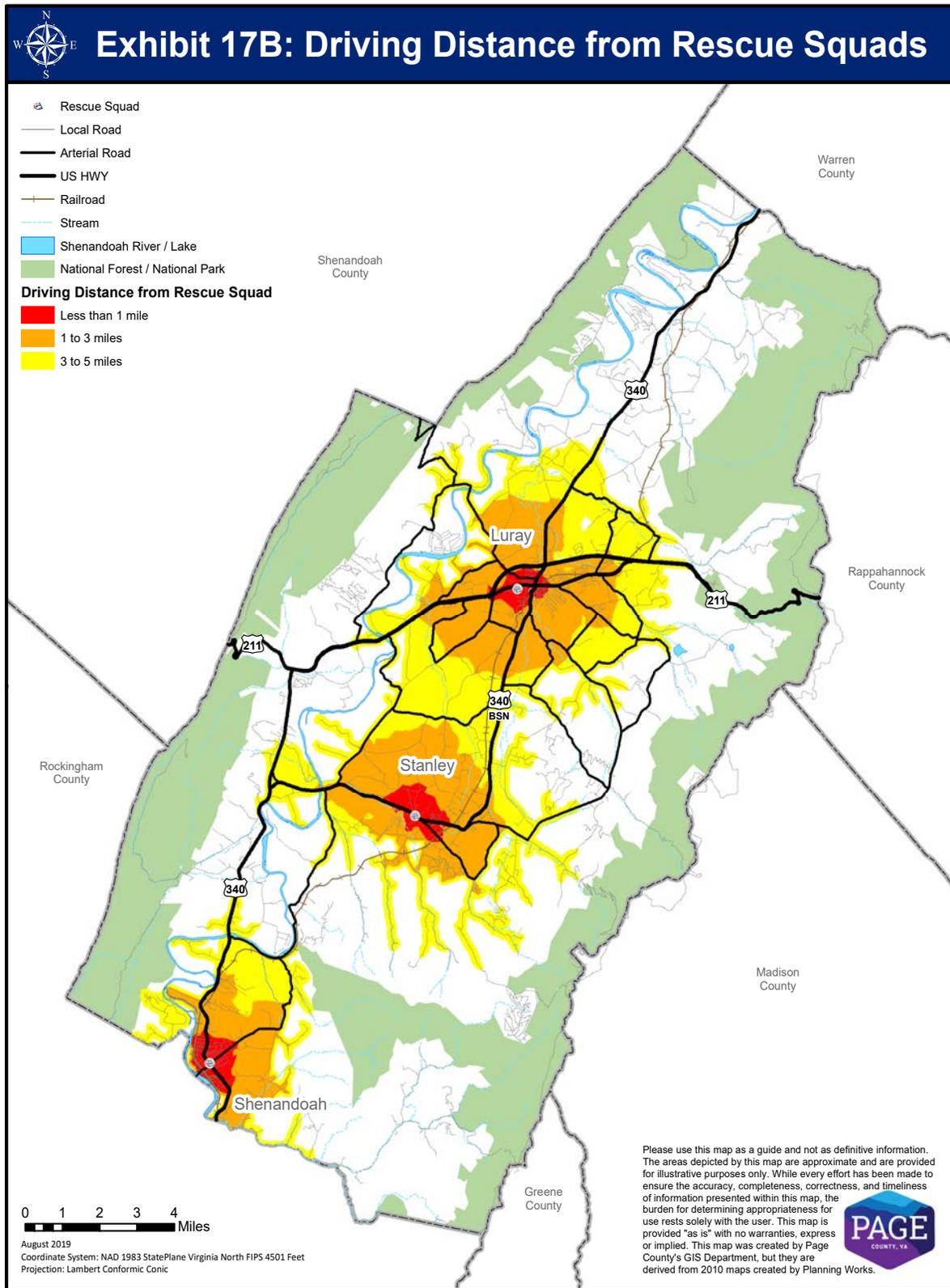
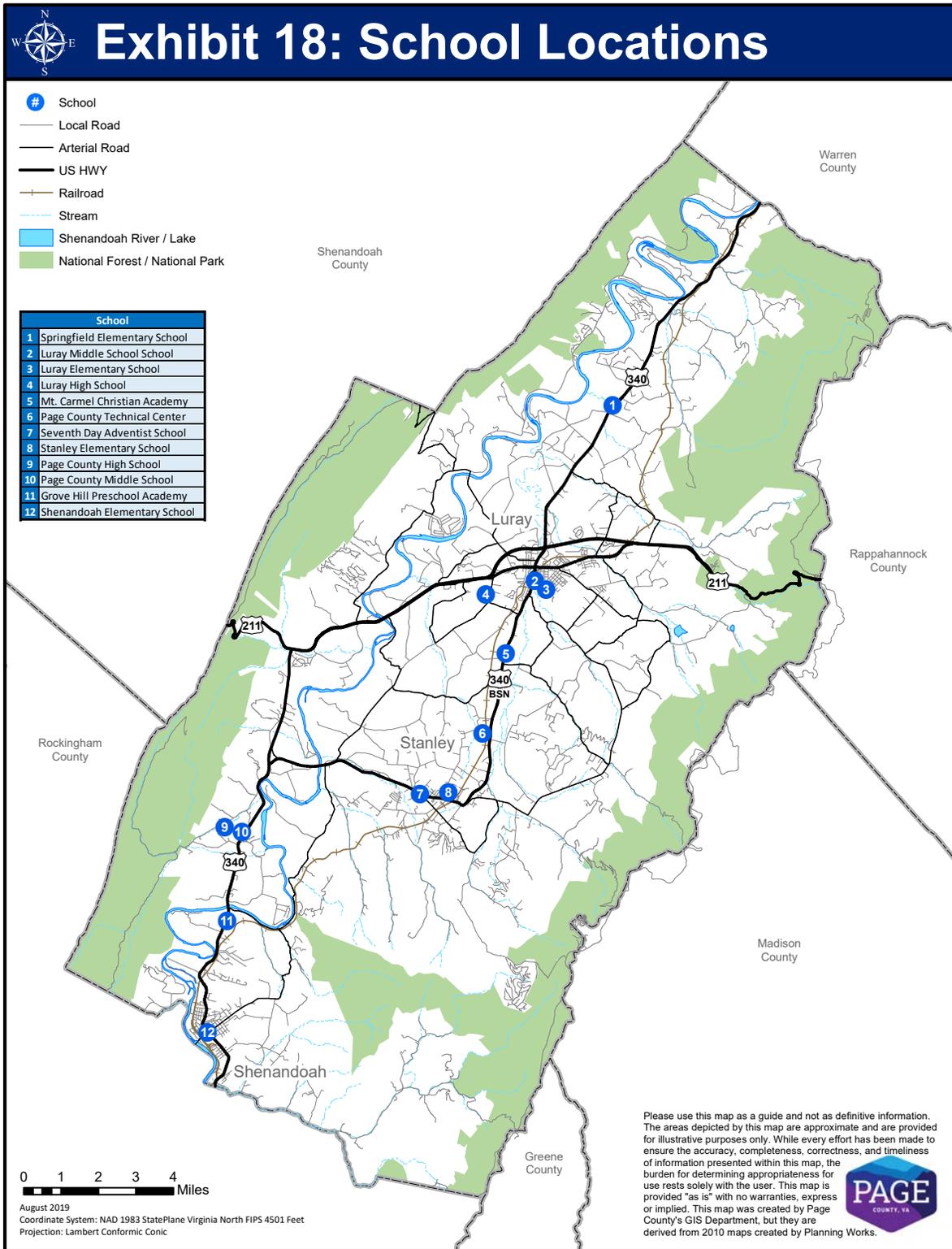


Exhibit 18: School Locations



## 2.5 Applying Lessons Learned From Current Practices

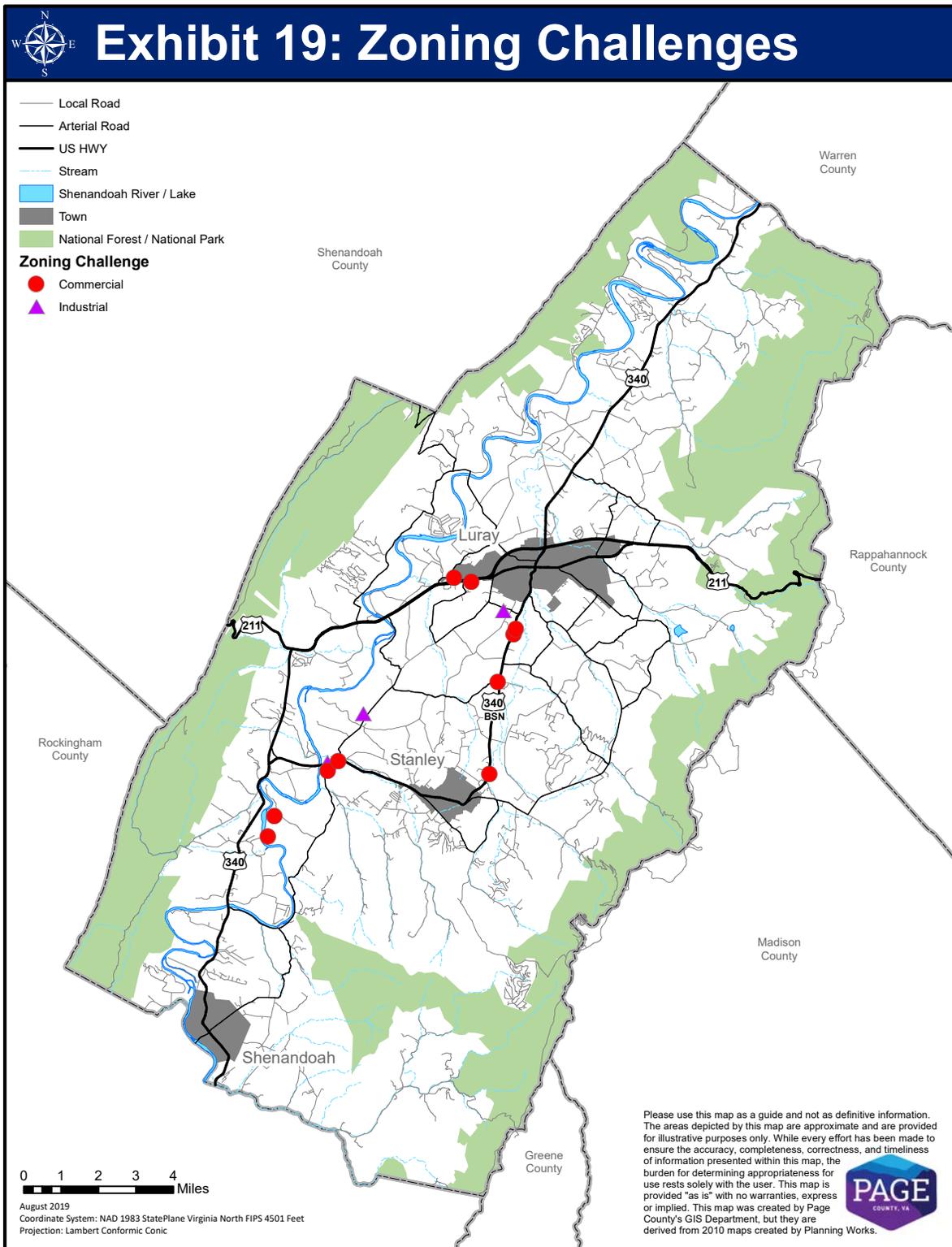
The County's vision for the future is limited primarily by decisions already made and manifested in the form of existing parcels, subdivisions, uses and zoning. Though not determinant of future land uses, some decisions were not consistent with a long-term perspective of 'what is good for Page County'. These decisions underscore the need for future land use decisions to be based on clear, defined guidelines and a process that balances property owner rights with a vision for the community-at-large. What follows can be identified as vision or future land use challenges and constraints.

- **Scattered Commercial and Industrial Areas.** Similar to many other rural communities, the pattern for commercial and industrial zoning in Page County historically has based on property owner request (*i.e.*, initiated by application) rather than a long-range comprehensive plan that identifies areas that are appropriate for more intensive uses. **Exhibit 18** identifies parcels in the unincorporated area that have been rezoned for commercial and industrial uses<sup>2</sup>. It indicates that the historical pattern of commercial and industrial zoning has been to locate those uses along the primary roadways, rather than to concentrate them at defined activity centers (or industrial parks) in areas served by public facilities. The sprawling distribution of these uses are not consistent with protecting agricultural uses by allowing more intensive uses to encroach into rural areas. Such distribution is contrary to the current vision of protecting the rural view sheds of roadways connecting the Towns as gateway corridors and as symbolic of the image of rural Page County.
- **Scattered By-Right Subdivisions.** The purpose of the by-right subdivision process has become a method typically used to circumvent the subdivision process. The purpose of subdivision regulations is to ensure that lots are divided in a rational usable pattern, that minimal development guidelines (*i.e.*, lot size, lot access, easements, *etc.*) are incorporated into lot design and that necessary public facilities are available to accommodate new development and protect existing residents (and agricultural uses). What was intended as a 'courtesy' process to allow farm families to 'split off' a tract of land in hard times has become the dominant form of land division in Page County. In 2007, all new residential lots created (a total of 76) were via the by-right process. The implications of this practice are identified in the following exhibits.

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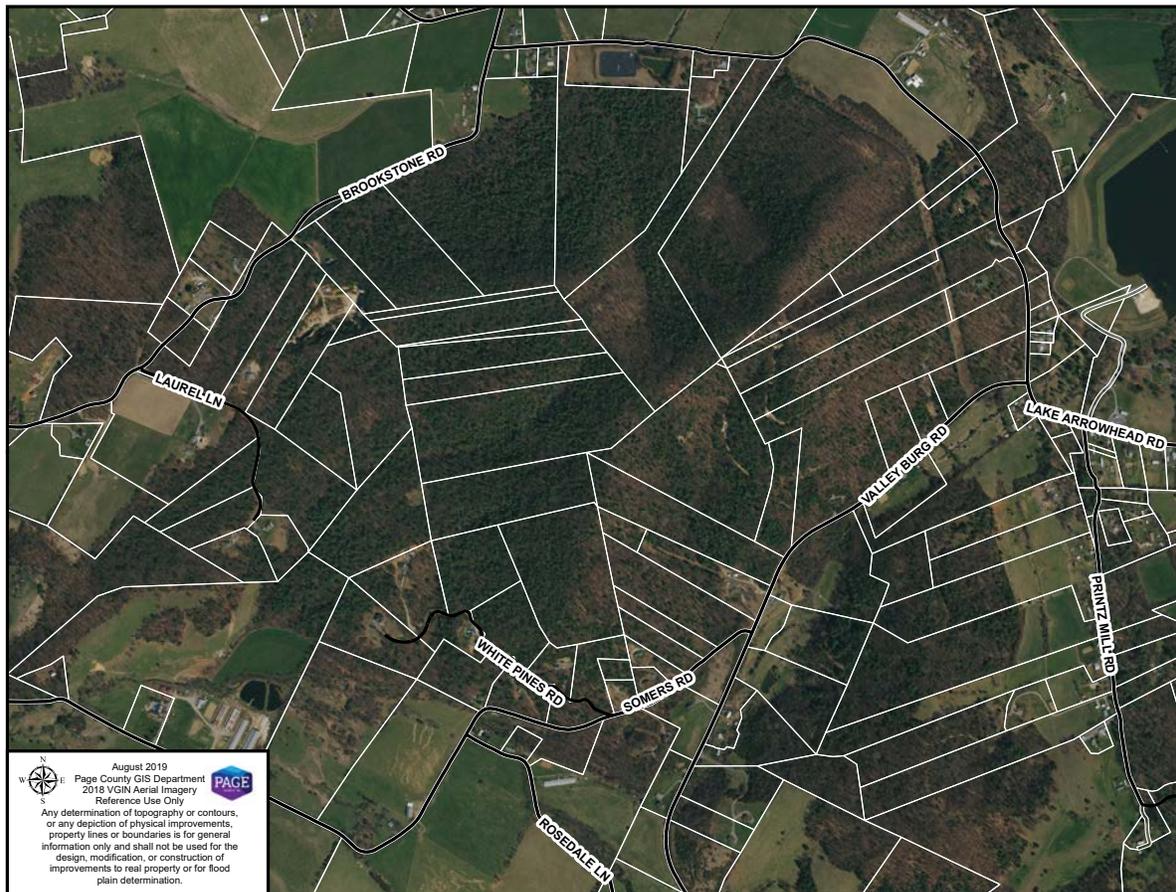
<sup>2</sup> Identified zoning is based on the current GIS and Assessor dataset, which currently is being updated, and may include parcels with multiple use/zoning designations (*i.e.*, agriculture / industrial).

Exhibit 19: Zoning Challenges Map



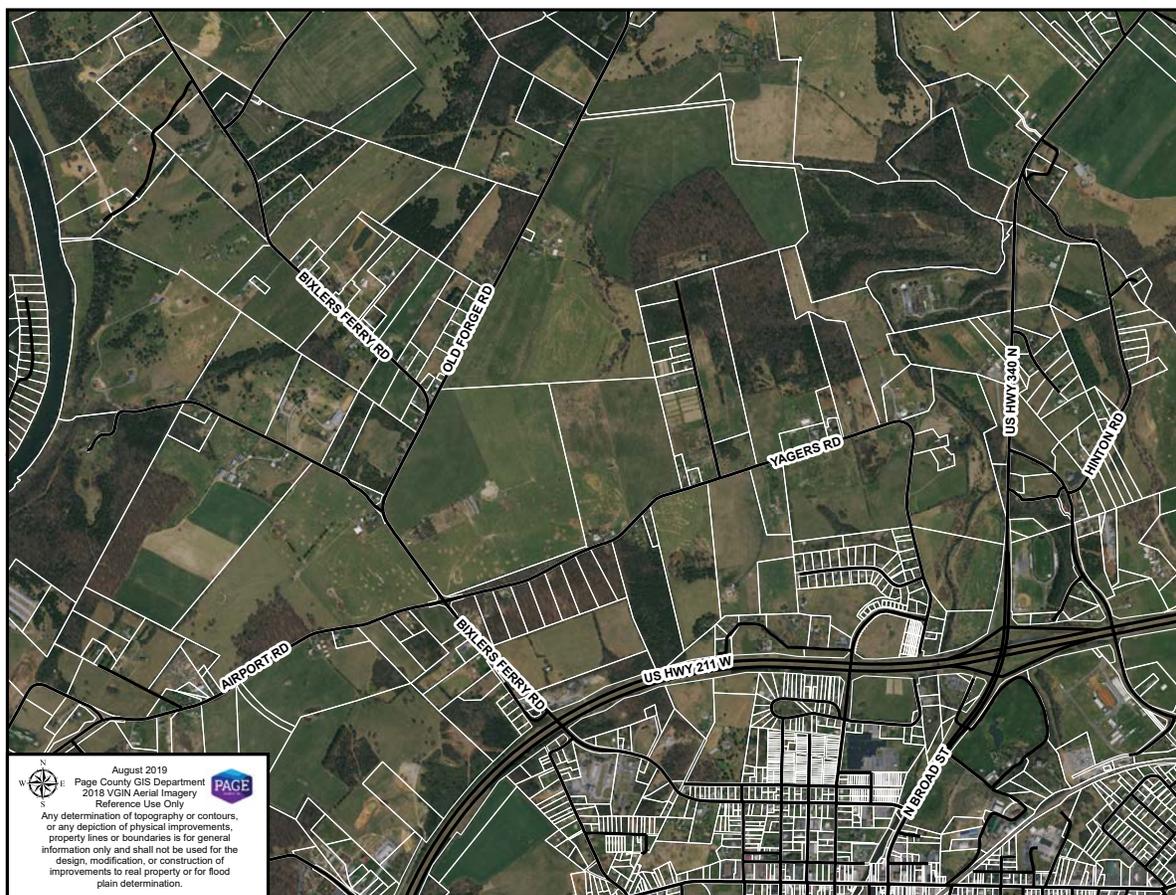
**Exhibit 20** shows a by-right subdivision for more than 30 lots that consists of a series of irregular-shaped lots. These lots were created solely to maximize the number of lots at the minimum 1.75-acre lot size with the ability to accommodate on-site water and sewer as required to meet the by-right exemption. Obvious problems include no access to interior lots, no right-of-way has been provided consistent with the County's roadway network and there is no plan and little opportunity to retain existing woodlands on the site.

**Exhibit 20: Substandard Lots**



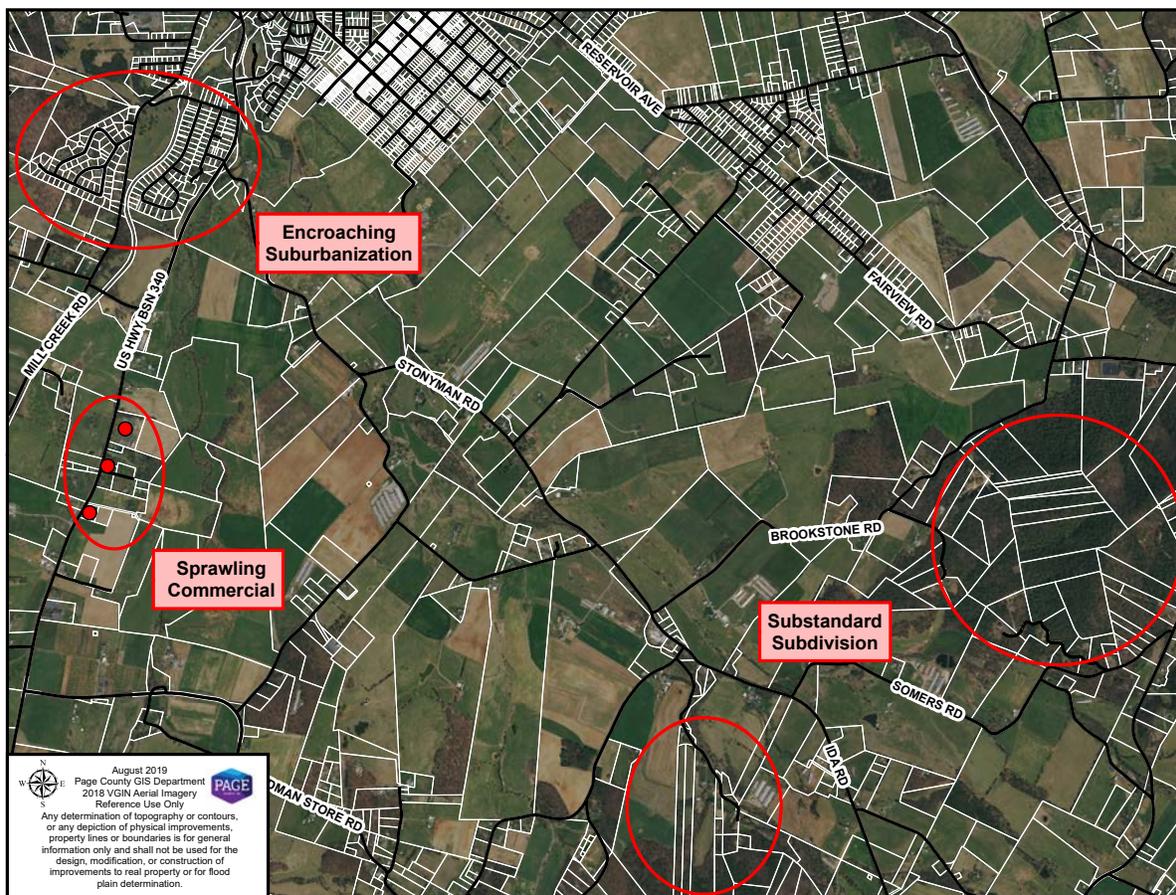
**Exhibit 21** shows the effect of allowing small, rural lots and large, suburban-sized lots (typically referred to as rural residential uses) in agricultural areas. Though many of the initial residents of the rural residential uses may understand that they are living in an agricultural area, where agricultural practices produce dust, smells, and equipment noise, often during early morning hours, subsequent purchasers may have an idyllic perception of living across the street or next door to a working farm. Faced with the reality, they become the source of nuisance complaints against the pre-existing farms, often challenging their survival (as the trend of nuisances cases across the country have shown).

**Exhibit 21: Encroachment Into Ag Areas**



**Exhibit 22** shows why the Plan is focused on protecting agricultural uses, from economic development and cultural preservation perspectives. A combination of threats completely surround a working farm, including encroaching suburbanization (from the north), sprawling commercial uses (the red dots; from the west) and substandard by-right subdivisions (from the east and south). This Plan will help farms, similar to the farm at the center of the proverbial bulls-eye, as they continue to face challenges from more intensive and potentially incompatible uses.

**Exhibit 22: Farm Threats**



**Encroachments Into Agricultural Areas.** As shown in **Exhibit 21**, the distribution of lots, (from under 1.75 acres to over 10 acres) throughout the unincorporated area could be described as sprawl. Not only is there a threat to working farms by non-agricultural uses, as discussed previously, but the encroachment of these suburban and large lot size parcels also distribute the need for facilities and services over a wide area. A wide distribution of facilities and services increases the cost when compared to limited service delivery areas for relatively compact development pattern.

In addition, the development of farmland per se increases service costs. Farm uses typically demand less from government, in terms of facilities and services, such as parks, schools, urban levels of service, response times for police and fire, and water and/or sewer availability. More intensive development patterns tend to have greater expectations for facilities and services with more intensive development patterns.

**Exhibit 20**, identifies the location of parcels based on grouped lot sizes. Taken together, **Exhibits 21 and 22** show a pattern of encroachment of smaller lots into areas previously comprised of large tracts, historically used for agriculture.

Exhibit 23: Sprawl

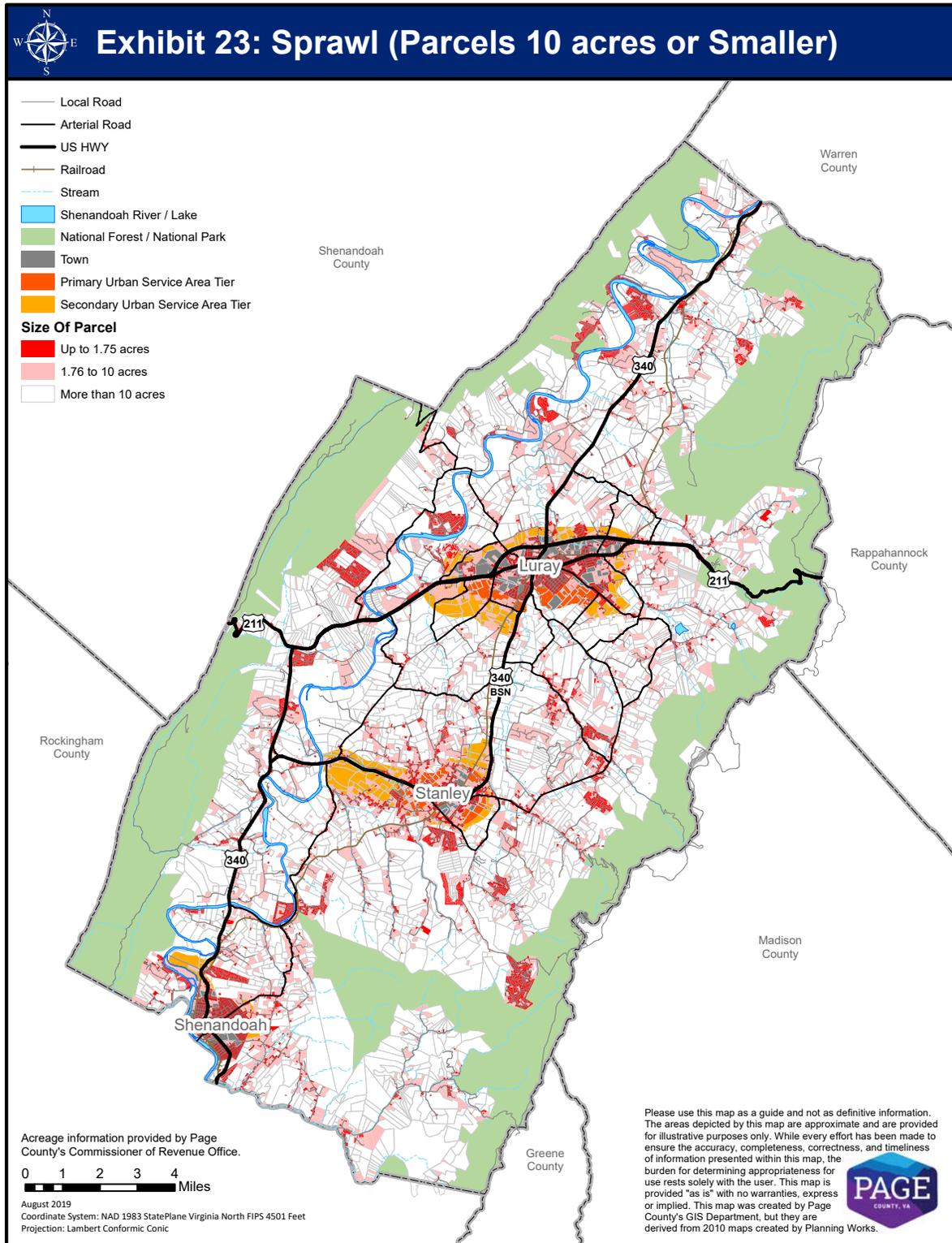


Exhibit 23A: Sprawl – Town of Luray

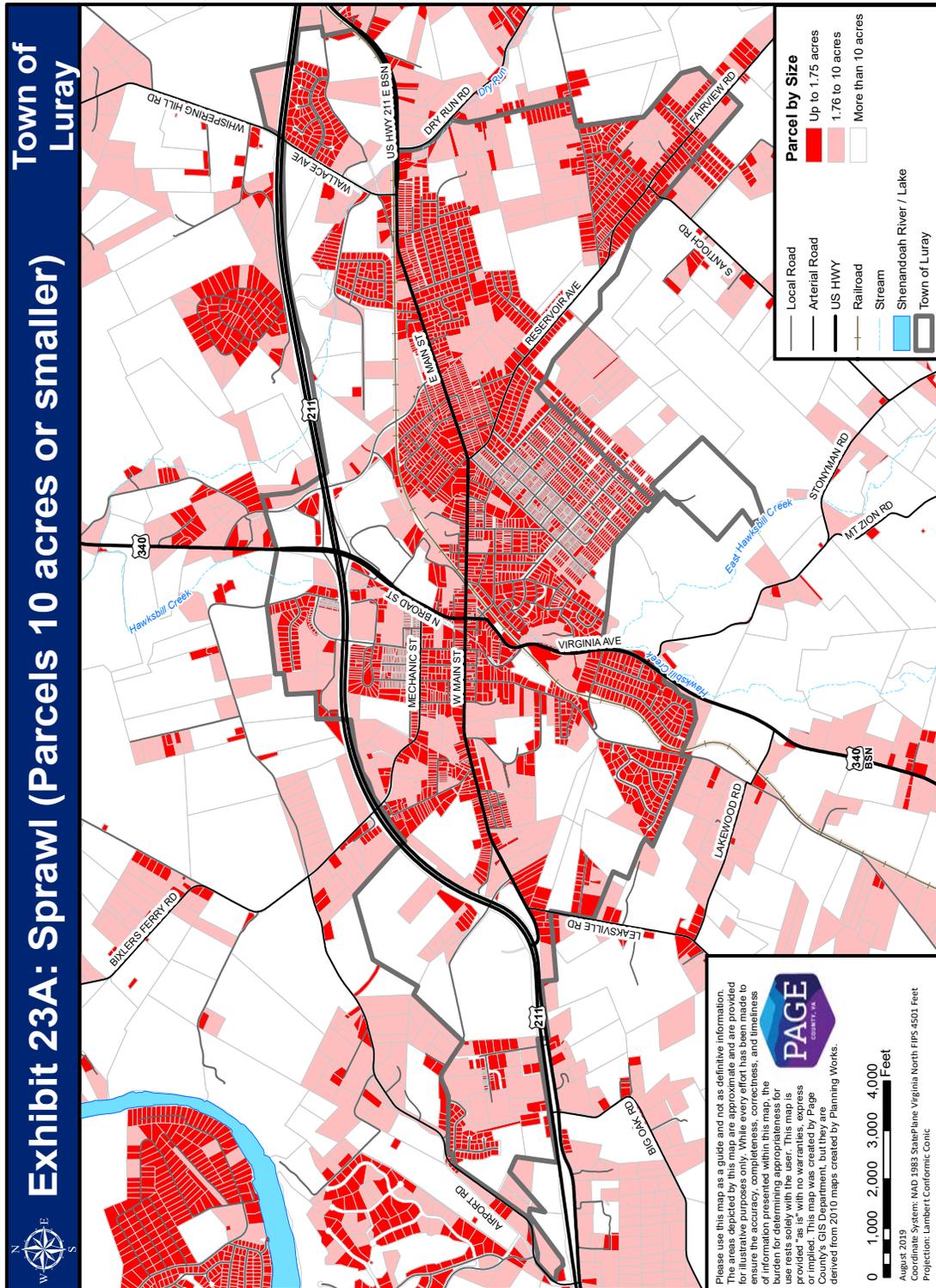


Exhibit 23B: Sprawl- Town of Stanley

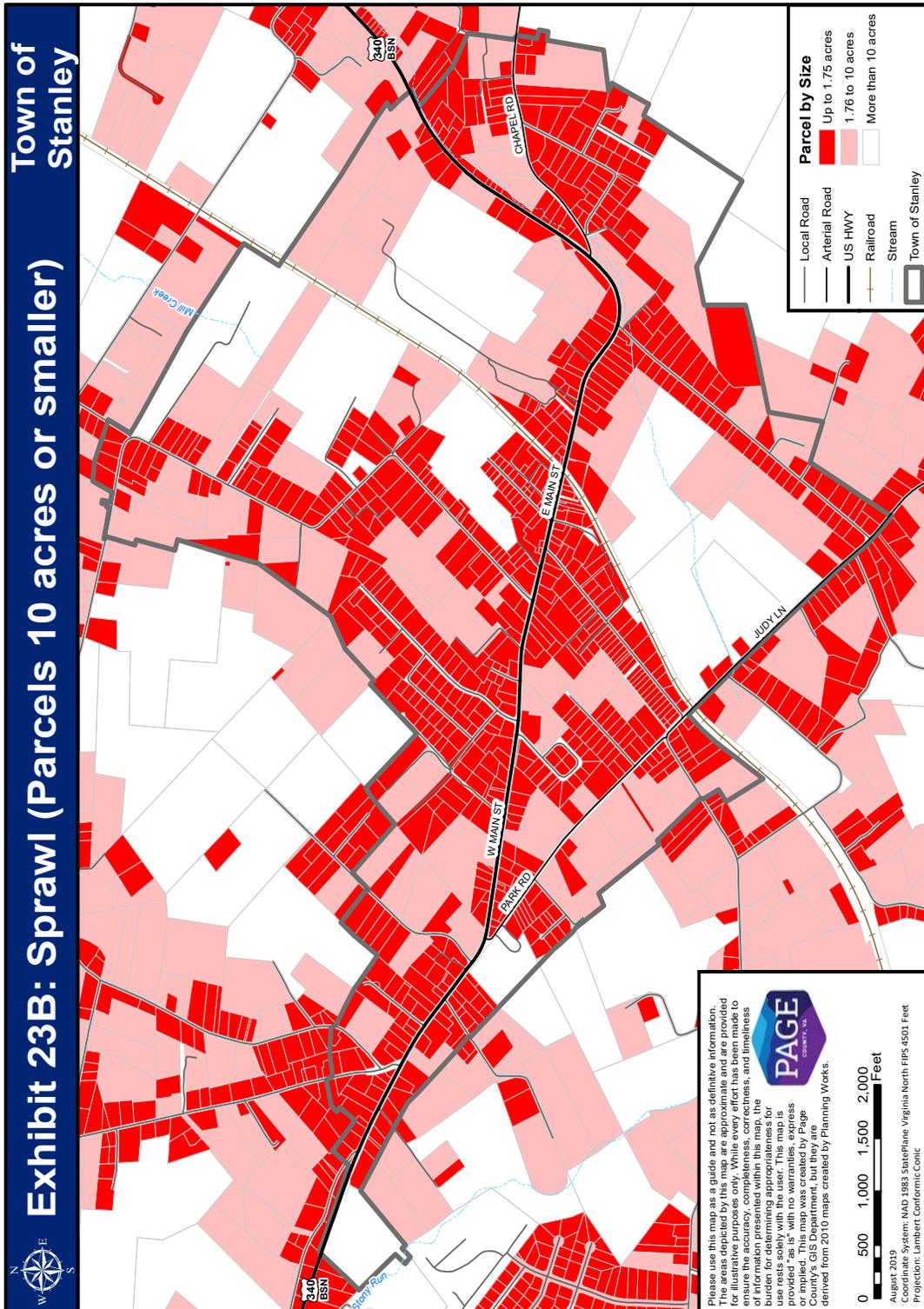


Exhibit 23C: Sprawl – Town of Shenandoah

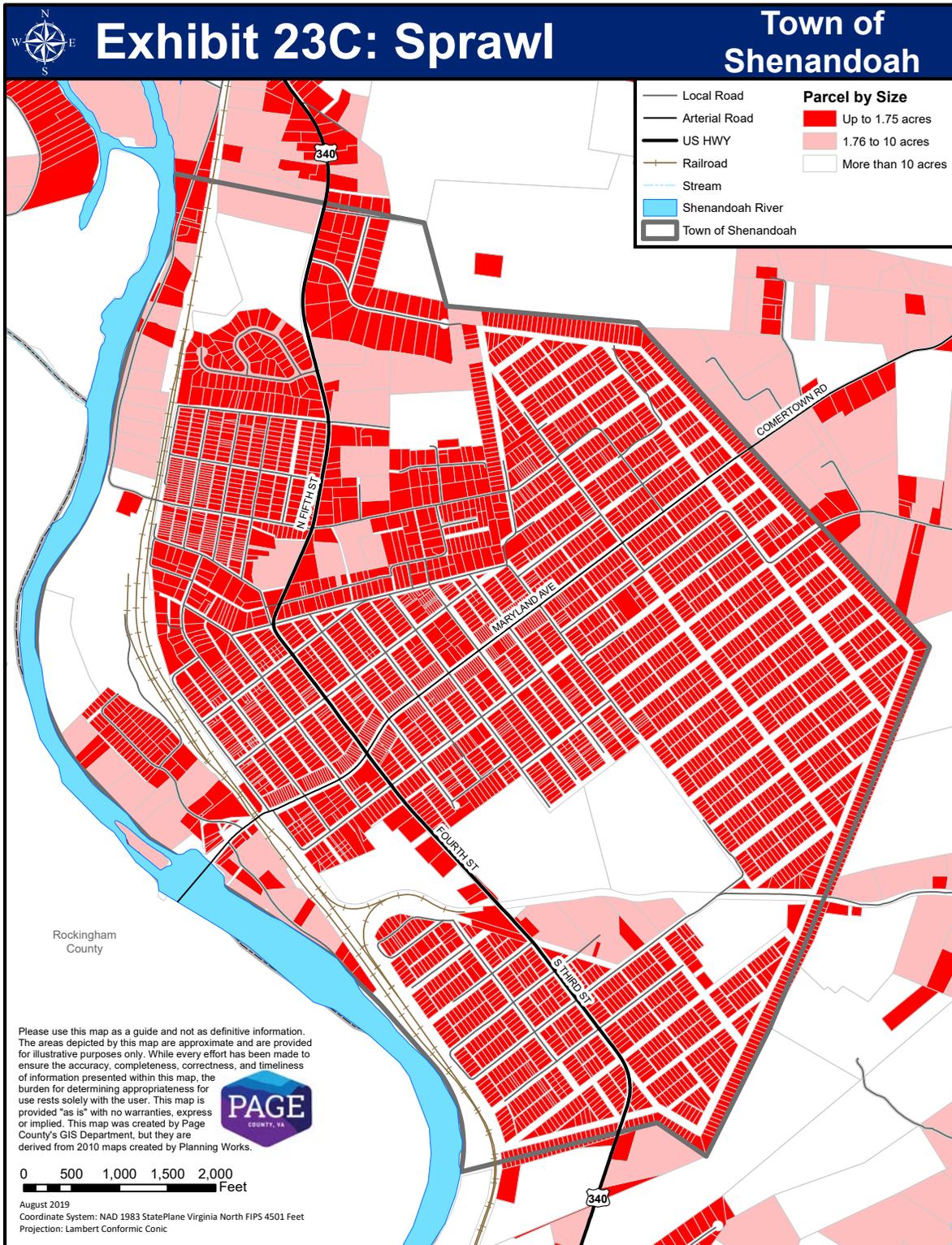


Exhibit 24: Existing Land Cover

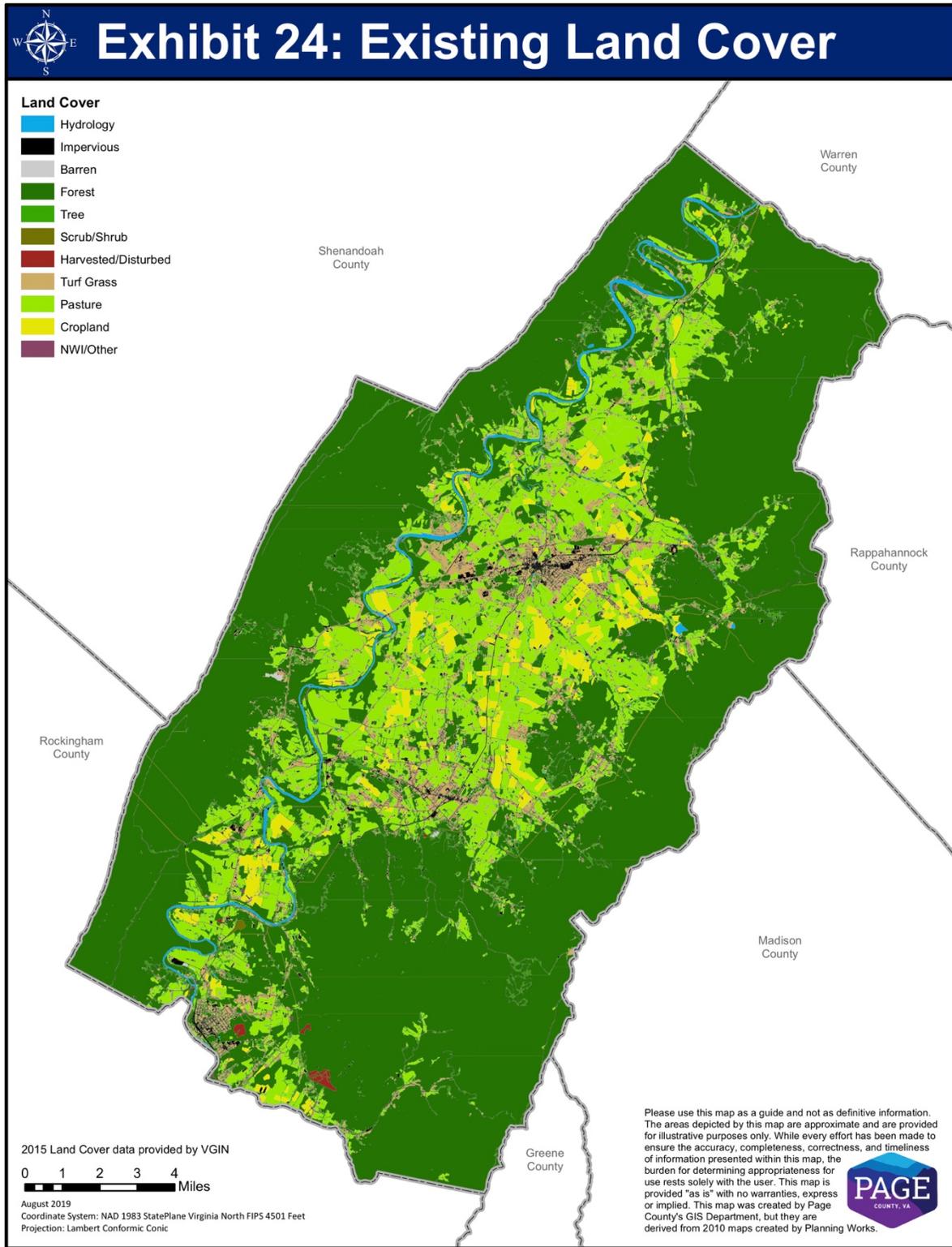
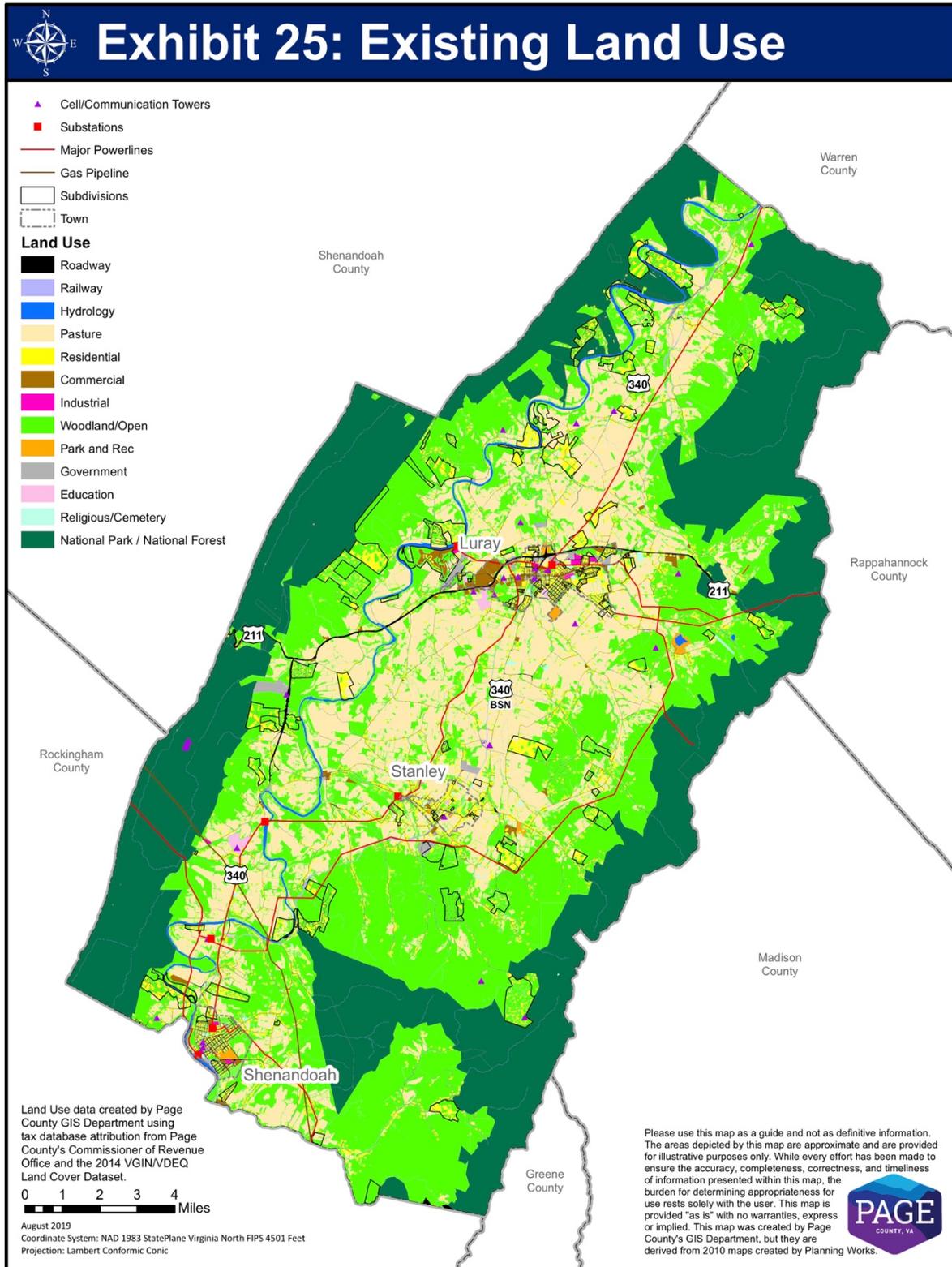


Exhibit 25: Existing Land Use





**Exhibits 24** (Existing Land Cover) and **8** (Farmland Soil Map) clearly show the extent to which these smaller lots have been created on some of the richest and most productive farmland in the county resulting in the loss of valuable farmland. **Exhibit 24** identifies developed parcels in cropland and woodland areas. **Exhibit 8** shows the prime farmland and the farmlands of statewide importance.

Because farmland is flat, cleared and usually well drained, it is the cheapest and easiest to develop to more intensive uses. Adding to that incentive to convert farmland is the fact that in Page County most of the land not otherwise identified as valuable farmland is constrained by steep slopes, as shown in **Exhibit 12**.

## **2.6 Creating a Growth Management System**

Allowing the status quo and existing trends, to continue will not be consistent with the long-range vision Page County citizens have established for their County. Economic development is important and can be realized by protecting the County's oldest and respected economic asset, agriculture, and identifying appropriate locations for commercial and industrial development so that the County can diversify its economy, create new jobs and successfully compete against other communities in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

It is also important to provide a range of housing alternatives that offer flexibility and affordability in a fiscally-responsible manner by balancing demand for facilities and services with funding ability and responsibility. These and other outcomes can and should occur without jeopardizing the rural character that has long defined the County.

## Chapter 3: Goals & Policies

The following goals and policies describe how Page County can respond to future development proposals. Because goals and policies are action-oriented, each goal and policy below begins with an “action term.” These statements describe the desired state of affairs for the community in the future. To provide consistency, the following definitions for each “action verb” shall be used to guide their interpretation.

**Allow** – to permit

**Conserve** - to protect from loss or harm

**Discourage** – to try to prevent, show opposition to; to express disapproval of

**Encourage** – to promote, advance, or foster; give support, aid

**Enhance** – to raise to a higher degree, magnify; to improve

**Ensure** – to secure or guarantee; to make sure or certain

**Limit** – to confine or restrict; to reduce to the smallest possible amount

**Preserve** – to maintain and uphold; keep up for continued survival

**Protect** – to defend or guard from attack; to keep safe, shield from damage

**Provide** – to supply or equip; to make available, furnish

**Pursue** – to seek to attain or accomplish; to carry on, continue

**Require** – to place under an obligation; to demand; to order

**Seek** – to try to locate or discover; to search for

**Support** – to uphold by aid, which may include financial or staff resources

**Goal 1: Preserve and enhance historic and cultural resources that reflect the heritage of the County.**

- Policy 1.1 Preserve and protect significant scenic, cultural, architectural, historical, and archaeological resources, sites and structures for the benefit of existing and future citizens.
- Policy 1.2 Encourage and assist property owners to pursue State and National Register designation, either individually or through thematic nominations.
- Policy 1.3 Encourage preservation and adaptive re-use of archeological sites and historic buildings, districts and sites by the private sector through the creation of incentives programs, use of conservation easements, designation of landmark buildings and districts, design review, public improvements and other tools.
- Policy 1.4 Ensure that proposed development is compatible with recognized historic, architectural, landscape or archeological attributes of the surrounding area and that it does not disturb archeological resources or agricultural activities on the development site.
- Policy 1.5 Require public and private development to preserve, to the maximum extent feasible, significant buildings and sites.
- Policy 1.6 Encourage surveys and recordings of public and private cemeteries and burial grounds.
- Policy 1.7 Encourage community awareness and public education about historic preservation.
- Policy 1.8 Pursue private and public partnerships to finance cultural facilities, programming and events.
- Policy 1.9 Protect the cultural and economic identity of the County and its unincorporated communities.

**Goal 2: Preserve and protect the natural, rural, and open space character of the County, its ecology and environmental features.**

- Policy 2.1 Preserve a rural lifestyle in the County outside of the towns, Incorporated Areas Tier and Community Service Area Tiers.
- Policy 2.2 Limit the impacts of development on the community's environmentally sensitive lands and key natural resources.
- Policy 2.3 Protect environmentally sensitive areas such as perennial streams, floodplains, wetlands, steep slopes and highly erodible soils.
- Policy 2.4 Preserve valuable open space and forests.
- Policy 2.5 Conserve and protect fragile and critical natural resource areas, which include woodlands, unique geological formations and environmentally sensitive areas.
- Policy 2.6 Encourage the protection of agricultural and environmental lands through conservation subdivision design, conservation easements, private covenants, deed restrictions or other mechanisms approved by the County.
- Policy 2.7 Require that non-residential developments be designed to preserve and enhance natural features such as vegetation, wildlife, waterways, wetlands, and topography.
- Policy 2.8 Encourage multiple uses of forested land that are non-intensive and compatible, such as outdoor recreation, wildlife habitats, watershed protection, and selective timber harvesting.
- Policy 2.9 Ensure that development on forestland is compatible with the environmental features of that land and does not diminish natural and scenic values.
- Policy 2.10 Encourage best practices for forest management, including reforestation.
- Policy 2.11 Preserve and protect National Parks and Forests from inappropriate development patterns.
- Policy 2.12 Protect open spaces around natural and historic areas such as land adjoining Shenandoah National Park, George Washington-Jefferson National Forest and the Shenandoah River to protect the integrity of the park and other natural scenic attractions.

- Policy 2.13 Encourage the preservation and protection of views from Skyline Drive and George Washington National Forest.
- Policy 2.14 Encourage lower density development in appropriate locations to preserve the rural character of the County and support environmental policies, such as water quality protection.
- Policy 2.15 Encourage the development of additional and connected green and open space throughout the County and its communities.
- Policy 2.16 Encourage greenways and blueways and other public access to link natural, cultural, and scenic resources such as designated scenic rivers and highways, registered historic properties, permanent open space easements, the National Park, National Forest and the Appalachian Trail Systems.
- Policy 2.17 Encourage and facilitate the donation of open space and conservation easements on land that is identified as having important scenic, historic, open space, conservation, agricultural, or wildlife-habitat qualities.
- Policy 2.18 Encourage preservation of important open space, conservation, agricultural, or wildlife-habitat lands during the development review process, including re-zonings or land use map amendments.
- Policy 2.19 Discourage land uses that have adverse environmental impacts.
- Policy 2.20 Emphasize coordination between land use policies with soil limitations, such as shallow depth to bedrock, and seasonal high water tables.
- Policy 2.21 Encourage coordination between land use policies, ordinances and Watershed Management Plans, as appropriate, with the towns of Luray, Stanley and Shenandoah.
- Policy 2.22 Encourage the use of Low-Impact Development (LID) and Green Infrastructure principles and techniques<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>5</sup> Low Impact Development: Low Impact Development (LID) is a storm water management approach based on the integration of complimentary land planning and engineering design tools. The approach concentrates on managing rainfall at the source by using decentralized, small scale controls.

- Policy 2.23 Encourage best practices for storm water management.
- Policy 2.24 Protect scenic viewsheds.
- Policy 2.25 Protect the night sky from light pollution particularly as it impacts Shenandoah National Park and George Washington National Forest.
- Policy 2.26 Protect *Karst* terrain from inappropriate development to preserve ground and surface water resources, reduce the potential for property damage from subsidence or other earth movement and sinkhole flooding and protect the public's health and safety.
- Policy 2.27 Encourage the reuse and recycling of residential, industrial, commercial and agricultural by-products.
- Policy 2.28 Support the incorporation of environmental education activities into the school district curriculum in order to encourage student environmental awareness and education.

**Goal 3: Maintain agricultural operations and continued production of crops and livestock in the County.**

- Policy 3.1 Minimize the impacts of development on the community's agricultural resources and especially land with prime agricultural soils of State Wide Importance as determined by NRCS and USDA Virginia Polytech Statewide University.
- Policy 3.2 Preserve and protect agricultural uses and the rural lifestyle and sense of community that has long defined Page County, especially in the Agricultural Protection Tier.
- Policy 3.3 Encourage agricultural operations and productivity and ensure the preservation and availability of the County's rural lands for the continued production of crops and livestock.
- Policy 3.4 Encourage and protect agriculture as the primary land use in rural areas.

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Green Infrastructure: A net work of multifunctional open spaces within and between towns including parks, gardens, woodlands, green corridors, waterways, street trees and open countryside. It encompasses all environmental resources and contributes towards sustainable resource management.

- Policy 3.5 Encourage agricultural uses as the most appropriate land use for agricultural areas on the Future Land Use Map.
- Policy 3.6 Enhance agriculture's benefit to local economies and support strategies that enhance long-term agricultural productivity in crop and livestock production and in industries closely related to agriculture.
- Policy 3.7 Where development is proposed on prime agricultural lands, encourage the clustering of dwellings to preserve a significant portion of the land for continuing agricultural uses.
- Policy 3.8 Require buffers and/or open space between agricultural uses and residential developments to minimize the negative impacts of one use on the other.
- Policy 3.9 Support programs that preserve agricultural lands with those of other entities organized for this purpose.
- Policy 3.10 Ensure the availability of appropriate land for agricultural operations.
- Policy 3.11 Encourage specialized agricultural uses to enable small farmers to profit from their efforts.
- Policy 3.12 Encourage and support locally grown farm products through activities such as farmers markets, roadside stands, u-pick operations, tree farms, agri-tourism and similar activities.
- Policy 3.13 Support a land evaluation suitability analysis (LESA) system that protects areas best suited for farming and protects important environmental resources, such as woodlands, floodplains, wetlands and hillsides, and to provide a fair, equitable and accurate assessment of the suitability of the land for continued agricultural use as part of the development review process and when considering requests for land use changes to non-farm use.
- Policy 3.14 Pursue land use decisions and plans that are consistent with LESA ratings and approve conversion of important farmland to non-farm use only if an overriding public need exists to change the land use and existing development areas cannot accommodate the new use.
- Policy 3.15 Provide limited, low-density residential opportunities in unincorporated areas not located on important farmland as determined by a Land Evaluation Site Assessment (LESA) rating system in a manner compatible with retaining land for agricultural activities in the area.

- Policy 3.16 Minimize conflicts between agriculture and non-agricultural land uses.
- Policy 3.17 Ensure that residential development in the unincorporated County is compatible with agricultural operations.
- Policy 3.18 Encourage the use of buffers to separate non-agricultural land uses from agricultural lands and operations.
- Policy 3.19 Discourage extension of public utilities and other growth-inducing public facilities into agricultural areas.
- Policy 3.20 Encourage all government agencies to consider the impacts that their programs and projects may have on maintaining the availability and use of agricultural land.
- Policy 3.21 Encourage and support the implementation and expansion of county agricultural and forestal districts by providing information on the benefits and incentives to farmland owners and farm organizations and by other means.
- Policy 3.22 Encourage and support the development and retention of agriculturally-related businesses as a valued element of the Page County economy.
- Policy 3.23 Support use-value taxation and other fiscal programs that help to alleviate economic burdens on owners of land used for agricultural, horticultural, forest or open space purposes and continue to use land use planning to protect agricultural land from escalating assessments as a result of development pressures.
- Policy 3.24 Discourage the use of public funds for projects that will have a negative impact on the preservation of agricultural lands.
- Policy 3.25 Pursue the use of agricultural zoning to preserve prime agricultural land for agricultural uses.
- Policy 3.26 Encourage policies that encourage the reuse of agricultural by-products.
- Policy 3.27 Pursue the use of local Right to Farm legislation, nuisance easements or other legal tools to protect on-going farming operations.

**Goal 4: Protect and manage the County’s surface and ground water resources.**

- Policy 4.1 Encourage best management practices to prevent potential groundwater pollution.
- Policy 4.2 Encourage the use of environmentally sensitive sewage treatment facilities for existing failed and inadequate sewage treatment systems, especially in areas lacking proper soils for traditional treatment.
- Policy 4.3 Encourage alternative on-site sewage treatment facilities and water systems that will be compatible with planned expansions of public systems, provided that such systems do not result in premature development or create potential liabilities for the County.
- Policy 4.4 Discourage intensive residential development on steep and excessive slopes with a grade greater than 15%.
- Policy 4.5 Support the protection of groundwater resources.
- Policy 4.6 Protect water quality by limiting areas of impervious surfaces and utilizing best management practices.
- Policy 4.7 Limit residential development and consider stricter development standards, such as increased setbacks, in areas adjacent to the Shenandoah River and its tributaries.
- Policy 4.8 Encourage and support preservation programs such as scenic easements, land purchase, tax incentives, and federal and state grants-in-aid to achieve water quality, open space and other environmental objectives.
- Policy 4.9 Protect flood prone areas from inappropriate development.
- Policy 4.10 Discourage housing and commercial development in the 100-year floodplain.
- Policy 4.11 Protect local and regional water resources through the application of the Chesapeake Bay TMDL and Virginia Watershed Improvement Plans.
- Policy 4.12 Support watershed management planning and consider watershed management objectives in conjunction with land use decisions.

Policy 4.13 Encourage low or no-impact open space activities in flood plains, wetlands and other sensitive areas where possible.

**Goal 5: Use the Comprehensive Plan and future land use map to guide land use and development decisions.**

Policy 5.1 Require findings that any amendments to the Future Land Use Map:

- a. Will be consistent with Plan priorities;
- b. Will be compatible with existing and future land uses for surrounding areas of the County;
- c. Will not create a shortage of any particular type of residential or non-residential land;
- d. Will support the efficient provision of public facilities and services; and
- e. Will enhance the overall quality of life in the County.

Policy 5.2 Develop, support and implement a Unified Development Code (UDC).

Policy 5.3 Encourage the coordination of residential, commercial and industrial development with the availability of existing or planned and approved public services.

Policy 5.4 Require development application approval be subject to the availability and accessibility of adequate public facilities.

Policy 5.5 Encourage the concentration of all major residential, commercial, and industrial uses in and around the existing local growth centers of Luray, Shenandoah, and Stanley where they can best be served with adequate public facilities and services.

Policy 5.6 Support Intergovernmental Agreements (IGAs) that formalize the relationship between the County and each town in the Community Service Area Tiers and encourage a land guidance system in which County and town plans are consistent, cohesive, sustainable and mutually agreed upon. Coordinate with the towns to manage growth adjacent to the towns, designate growth areas and plan for future service areas.

Policy 5.7 Support joint or coordinated action with Town governments, independent county authorities, and other regional entities to achieve countywide growth management goals.

- Policy 5.8 Ensure that adequate public facilities and services will be provided for new development consistent with development timing and need.
- Policy 5.9 Ensure that new development is compatible and integrated with surrounding uses, especially agricultural.
- Policy 5.10 Ensure that proposed and intent of the comprehensive plan developments are consistent with the purpose and intent of the Future Land Use Map.
- Policy 5.11 Encourage logical expansions of town boundaries and rational extensions of facilities in the Community Service Area Tiers to prepare for future urban and suburban development.
- Policy 5.12 Limit intensive development patterns to defined (current and future) public facility service areas in the Community Service Area Tiers.
- Policy 5.13 Within the Community Service Area Tiers:
  - a. Discourage the premature conversion of rural or agricultural lands.
  - b. Encourage residential developments that are consistent with the towns’ respective land use plans, are contiguous to existing corporate limits and have adequate public facilities.
  - c. Encourage new development to be connected to a centralized wastewater system, except for rural uses. Interim systems such as individual septic systems may be permitted provided there will be participation with a public system should one become available.
- Policy 5.14 Limit the expansion of public and semi-public utilities and uses that interfere with the viability of farming in the Agricultural Protection and Environmental Preservation Tiers.
- Policy 5.15 Discourage scattered, non-agricultural industrial or warehousing-related development in unincorporated rural areas.
- Policy 5.16 Ensure that there is adequate available land designated for residential and non-residential development that is compatible with surrounding uses and served or able to be served by adequate public facilities.
- Policy 5.17 Ensure that public facilities and utilities are adequate, development impacts are assessed, ground and surface waters are completely protected and sufficient buffering is provided for adjacent land uses as part of the development review process.
- Policy 5.18 Encourage compatible land use around Luray Caverns Airport.

**Goal 6: Encourage and develop a diverse and viable local economy compatible with the County's rural character.**

- Policy 6.1 Pursue and support an effective local economic development program.
- Policy 6.2 Encourage economic growth that is compatible with the County's rural character while generating a positive net cash flow for the County.
- Policy 6.3 Encourage the expansion of telecommunications infrastructure throughout the County, including an open access fiber optic network, broadband service and other high-speed communications infrastructure, to support technology-dependent industries.
- Policy 6.4 Ensure that site plans for business and industrial development include high quality building design standards and well-designed landscaping.
- Policy 6.5 Protect and enhance the environmental resources of the County, recognizing they can attract agriculture, business and industry as well as provide hunting and fishing for local residents and tourists.
- Policy 6.6 Promote local employment opportunities.
- Policy 6.7 Encourage the attraction of new business activities that enhance existing industrial and commercial activities in the county, particularly active farming and forestry operations.
- Policy 6.8 Encourage small business incubators in existing or new buildings in commercially zoned areas.
- Policy 6.9 Encourage commercial and industrial business to locate in industrial parks and existing commercial centers or designated growth areas.
- Policy 6.10 Allow commercial and industrial uses in rural areas or near existing neighborhoods only if the use:
- a. Does not unduly impede traffic flow on roads or intersections;
  - b. Is not, and does not, initiate strip development;
  - c. Has direct access to adequate roads, railroads or airports;
  - d. Meets all standards for water, sewage and waste disposal; and
  - e. Does not adversely affect surrounding agricultural or residential activities.

- Policy 6.11 Support redevelopment of existing commercial and industrial facilities that is compatible with surrounding development.
- Policy 6.12 Enhance the County’s tourism and retail base.
- Policy 6.13 Support and encourage a local skilled labor force needed by local employers.
- Policy 6.14 Emphasize and encourage the benefits of GED attainment and vocational-technical skills training.
- Policy 6.15 Encourage accessible and convenient vocational-technical training center sites.
- Policy 6.16 Use established incentives to encourage development and job creation. These incentives are in targeted areas to encourage development.
  - *Enterprise Zone (Exhibit 3)* are incentives based on the amount of financial investment and jobs created by your business.
  - *Opportunity Zone* designed to spur economic development by providing tax benefits to investors.
  - *HUBZone* encourages job creation in distressed areas by offering federal contracting opportunities if business locates in a HUBZone.
- Policy 6.16 Encourage companies that want clean energy to locate their businesses in Page County.

**Goal 7: Protect and enhance the County's fiscal resources.**

- Policy 7.1 Evaluate the impact of all development proposals on County and other provider facilities and services and consistency with the Comprehensive Plan.
- Policy 7.2 Consider all available land use, fiscal, natural resources and graphical information to make informed land use decisions.
- Policy 7.3 Encourage locating residential and non-residential development in areas that maximize the use of existing infrastructure and minimize service costs.

- Policy 7.4 Ensure the provision of capital improvements in a manner consistent with the county’s land use objectives and financing responsibilities.
- Policy 7.5 Require the evaluation of short- and long-range fiscal impacts to the County and other service providers for necessary capital improvements required by new development.

**Goal 8: Support affordable and attainable housing for those who live or work in Page County.**

- Policy 8.1 Encourage and support initiatives that upgrade the quality of life and standard of living for residents, including adequate and affordable housing.
- Policy 8.2 Provide guidance, resources, and incentives to increase the supply of affordable housing (both renter- and owner-occupied units) for households at or below the county’s median household income.
- Policy 8.3 Encourage adequate affordable housing opportunities for low- to moderate-income residents of Page County and to those working and desiring to live in Page County.
- Policy 8.4 Ensure variety and choice in housing and equal housing opportunities.
- Policy 8.5 Emphasize the creation and preservation of safe, high quality and sustainable neighborhoods.
- Policy 8.6 Encourage the upgrading of existing, substandard housing to meet minimum standards.
- Policy 8.7 Encourage the preservation, renovation and restoration of existing structures to maintain the housing stock and expand affordable housing opportunities.
- Policy 8.8 Support assistance to those populations least able to attain safe, affordable housing through the private sector alone.

**Goal 9: Enhance the visual appeal and identity of Page County.**

- Policy 9.1 Support the planning efforts of the towns of Luray, Shenandoah and Stanley consistent with the County’s coordinated approach to growth management.

- Policy 9.2 Encourage the use of cluster development, new urbanism or neo-traditional development, and mixed-use design as alternatives to conventional suburban and rural sprawl.
- Policy 9.3 Discourage urban and suburban uses and urban and suburban development patterns that detract from the long-term vision of rural Page County, including but not limited to the following areas:
- a. Springfield to Overall
  - b. U.S. 340 between Lakewood Road and Hawksbill Drive; Stonyman Road to Kite Hollow Road
  - c. Stonyman
  - d. Leaksville to Grove Hill Road
  - e. Hamburg to Massanutten
- Policy 9.4 Encourage and support major corridors and gateway locations to promote a positive visual appearance, including landscaping and signage.
- Policy 9.5 Enhance landscaping, buffering, and street tree plantings along roadways for key gateways and corridors in conjunction with programmed capital improvement projects.
- Policy 9.6 Protect the cultural and economic identity of established towns and communities.

**Goal 10: Emphasize personal property rights during the planning process and while applying the policies of this Plan.**

- Policy 10.1 Ensure that the Plan is enforced fairly and consistently.
- Policy 10.2 Ensure that the development review process:
- a. Is timely;
  - b. Provides adequate information and opportunities for public input;
  - c. Fosters open communications between stakeholders and appointed and elected decision-makers;
  - d. Balances the rights of property owners with the responsibilities to adjacent property owners and the community at large;

- e. Considers the cumulative impacts of development decisions on future generations;
- f. Provides due process in all administrative and legislative deliberations and decisions;
- g. Has consistent requirements that provide flexibility within the written criteria;
- h. Is designed to achieve the goals and policies of the Comprehensive Plan; and
- i. Establishes incentives for exceeding the minimum development criteria.

Policy 10.3 Minimize opportunities for claims of “taking,” as defined in the Fifth and Fourteenth Amendments to the U.S. Constitution.

Policy 10.4 Impose regulations only in proportion to the need.

Policy 10.5 Support incentives to achieve land use goals.

Policy 10.6 Ensure that application of the Plan is consistent with all local, State and Federal statutes.

Policy 10.7 Maintain policies and regulations that encourage consistency and predictability in the development process.

**Goal 11: Provide community facilities and human services that are efficient, progressive, accessible, and responsive to the needs of the community.**

Policy 11.1 Ensure that adequate utility services are available to meet existing and projected needs of all County users.

Policy 11.2 Develop and maintain adequate public facilities that meet the current and future needs of the County.

Policy 11.3 Ensure that the minimum level of service, consistent with development need, is provided at the time development occurs.

Policy 11.4 Enhance Page County’s telecommunication infrastructure.

- Policy 11.5 Provide sewage treatment facilities to meet the County's water resource and environmental protection objectives.
- Policy 11.6 Require sewage treatment facilities at property owner expense where a significant health threat is identified by the Page County Health Department and pursue any applicable grant or low interest loan programs to assist in funding.
- Policy 11.7 Encourage environmentally safe alternative sewage treatment methods for residential development, including existing dwelling units, where septic systems fail and the Health Department establishes that repair of the existing system is not possible.
- Policy 11.8 Encourage the use of Sanitary Districts to facilitate water, sewer and other services within communities.
- Policy 11.9 Encourage public transportation by supporting alternative, efficient means of transportation such as rail, bus and taxi services.
- Policy 11.10 Ensure that transportation planning is coordinated with land use planning.
- Policy 11.11 Support subdivision road standards consistent with VDOT's subdivision street requirements.
- Policy 11.12 Seek VDOT review of all subdivisions and subdivision plans to ensure their access to VDOT's roadways meets VDOT's standards, and support their findings.
- Policy 11.13 Encourage all road right of ways, dedications and improvements to consider future improvement needs.
- Policy 11.14 Encourage the use of Context Sensitive Design principles, without compromising mobility or safety, when increases in traffic volume on primary corridors necessitate road improvements.
- Policy 11.15 Minimize multiple commercial entrances within commercially designated areas using Access Management Techniques<sup>14</sup> such as joint-use

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<sup>14</sup> Access Management Techniques: Methods to limit and consolidate access from roadways to residential, commercial or industrial development areas that support safety, efficiency and appropriate circulation.

entrances and inter parcel connectors with access easements that detail maintenance responsibilities.

Policy 11.16 Encourage the development of frontage roads to access properties when possible.

Policy 11.17 Encourage ride sharing and continue to provide commuter parking lots at strategic locations.

Policy 11.18 Encourage the development and use of a bike-walkway system in the community to support exercise, outdoor recreation and the conservation of natural resources.

Policy 11.19 Seek funding opportunities and encourage citizen involvement in the planning process for a bike-walkway system.

Policy 11.20 Ensure that public police, fire, and other emergency services provide the highest level of citizen protection within the fiscal resources of the County.

Policy 11.21 Emphasize the concentration of residential development in existing growth areas and avoid dispersed development in order to effectively provide emergency services to citizens.

Policy 11.22 Ensure that the County's administrative facilities are located, designed, and constructed in compliance with legal requirements and the policies of this Plan.

Policy 11.23 Encourage development of senior housing, adult day care and senior daily activity centers.

Policy 11.24 Encourage affordable services for senior citizens such as daily assistance, housing, transportation and a senior center.

Policy 11.25 Support the public school system, recognizing the quality of life, economic and social benefits of a quality public education system.

Policy 11.26 Encourage the development of additional licensed child day care facilities and after school programs.

Policy 11.27 Support opportunities for interaction between senior services and children's services.

Policy 11.28 Support recreational activities for youth.

**Goal 12: Promote efficient energy management.**

- Policy 12.1 Establish an information base and training program on energy management techniques and benefits. Encourage such training in schools at all grade levels.
- Policy 12.2 Encourage all residential, commercial, industrial and agricultural planners to incorporate trees for carbon absorption, for atmospheric cooling, and for shade to the extent feasible.
- Policy 12.3 Encourage the conservation of existing forest land and discourage the conversion of forest land to other purposes.
- Policy 12.4 Encourage conversion of lower quality farmland to forest.
- Policy 12.5 Encourage the use of Energy Star Compliant appliances.
- Policy 12.6 Encourage the efficient design and construction of homes
- Policy 12.7 Encourage the use of electric vehicles and the establishment of more charging stations.
- Policy 12.8 Encourage electric utilities to maximize technology to more evenly distribute the loads in order to reduce fossil fuel consumption.

**Goal 13: Promote renewable energy sources.**

- Policy 13.1 Continue to encourage and support the existing hydroelectric power plants in the County.
- Policy 13.2 Encourage farms to use small scale windmills to generate electricity.
- Policy 13.3 Discourage utility scale wind power.
- Policy 13.4 Encourage residential solar power systems in all zoning districts.
- Policy 13.5 Encourage solar power systems on the roofs of commercial and industrial buildings.
- Policy 13.6 Encourage farmers to generate energy with renewable resources for use on site.
- Policy 13.7 Encourage the development renewable energy sources with public utility companies to serve Page County Customers.

## Chapter 4: Implementation Overview

Page County's Comprehensive Plan is intended to be a dynamic document that responds to changing needs and conditions. To assess the Plan's effectiveness in responding to changing conditions, the County will need to monitor actions affecting the Plan. As a result of these monitoring efforts or private development requests, the County will need to amend the Plan periodically. However, Plan amendments should not be made lightly.

County Supervisors and Planning Commission members should consider each proposed amendment carefully to determine whether or not it is consistent with the Plan's goals and policies. The cumulative effect of many changes may be a change in policy direction. For this reason, Comprehensive Plan amendments must be evaluated in terms of their significance to overall County policy.

This section describes the processes to annually review, monitor and amend the Plan, the Plan's goals and policies, and the Future Land Use Map.

### 4.1 Annual Review and Monitoring

Department Directors should provide to the County Administrator an annual review of Comprehensive Plan related activities prior to the initiation of the budget process each year.

The annual review is intended to:

- Measure the County's success in achieving plan goals through the recommended strategies;
- Propose strategies to be pursued under the coming year's budget;
- Identify unlisted strategies that will achieve Plan goals;
- Document growth trends and compare those trends to plan projections;
- List development actions that affect the Plan's provisions; and
- Explain difficulties in implementing the Plan.

This annual review should include statements identifying the departments' progress in achieving the goals of the Plan, the impact of the Plan on service provision, and proposed programs to help achieve the Plan's goals. The annual review should be used as a tool to help set budgetary priorities.

## 4.2 Land Use Map Amendments

The Future Land Use Map is intended to serve as a guide for public and private development and land use decisions. The County should adopt a formal amendment process in the Unified Development Code (UDC), thereby making the Future Land Use amendment process subject to adopted code provisions. Land use amendments are anticipated as growth occurs and market conditions change. While land use amendments may occur more frequently than policy changes, they should not occur more than once per year. By limiting opportunities to amend the Future Land Use Map, the County will reduce the potential for incremental land use changes to result in unintended policy shifts.

## 4.3 Policy Review and Amendment

To ensure that the Comprehensive Plan remains an effective guide for decision-makers, Page County should conduct periodic major evaluations of the plan policies and strategies. These evaluations should be conducted every four to six years, depending on the rate of change in the community, and should consider the following:

- Progress in implementing the Plan;
- Changes in community needs and other conditions that form the basis of the Plan;
- Fiscal conditions and the ability to finance public investments recommended by the Plan;
- Community support for the Plan's goals and policies; and
- Changes in county, state or federal laws that affect the County's tools for Plan implementation.

The major review process should encourage input from the public, specific interest groups, service providers, County departments and elected and appointed decision-makers. Amendments that appear appropriate as a result of this review would be processed according to the adopted Plan amendment process.

## 4.4 Key Implementation Tools

The Plan implementation program identifies a number of tools available to the County that may be employed to bring the goals, policies and strategies of the Plan to fruition. These implementation tools are interrelated and work together providing continuity and breadth to the implementation program.

### 4.4.1 Development Regulations

On a day-to-day basis, the development regulations (zoning and subdivision regulations) are the most important tools for Plan implementation. The Future Land Use Map and

the growth-related goals are achieved through myriad incremental decisions about specific development projects. Because the Plan does not carry the force of law, the County must accomplish Plan policies through a variety of actions, including amendments to the County subdivision and zoning regulations (to be identified as a Unified Development Code). Updates to these development regulations should be consistent with the Plan to ensure that incremental actions on development requests support the Plan's goals, policies and recommendations.

#### **4.4.2 Capital Improvements Plan (CIP)**

Short- and long-range CIPs are important planning tools to ensure that the County has planned the most cost effective facilities and to determine whether the County will have the capability to fund needed public facilities. The short-range CIP should identify and estimate costs of improvements needed to serve anticipated growth for the next 5 to 10 years; the long-range CIP should identify and estimate costs of improvements needed to serve anticipated growth for the next 10 to 20 years. This plan is not an engineering document, but should provide enough specificity to determine which costs are required to remedy existing deficiencies and which costs provide new capacity that will be demanded by new development. The short-range CIP should establish the basis for the County's development fees and be updated annually. The long-range CIP should be updated at least once every five years or when significant changes to the base systems modify the County's long-term capital investment strategies (e.g., changes in service areas, significant changes in the Future Land Use Plan, changes in service demand or delivery patterns). The CIPs should list short-term projects needed to maintain existing levels of service, with each project being assigned a budget and a time frame for completion. The CIP also should delineate the proportion of project costs that is designed to provide new capacity and the proportion that is required to fund existing deficiencies. This delineation will enable the County to quantify the capital costs associated with new development and to monitor the expenditure of development fees.

#### **4.1.3 Intergovernmental Agreements**

Intergovernmental agreements (IGAs) are essentially treaties between two or more units of government for the mutual benefit of all parties. Within the context of this plan, an agreement between the County, Towns and other providers could address growth within Community Service areas. Such an agreement could establish each party's rights, responsibilities and recourse within a cooperative growth management process designed to implement the Community Service area policies of this plan. Items typically addressed in local government IGAs include: development review authority, annexation processes, infrastructure projects, building and related codes, public safety mutual aid agreements and IGA administrative procedures.

**4.4.4 Comprehensive Plan**

Completion of the Comprehensive Plan is not the end of planning for the future. Other planning projects will build upon the foundation of this plan, whether they are neighborhood plans that provide detailed examinations of needs and conditions or area plans developed in partnership with a developer. As the County continues to plan for the future, these planning efforts should be based on the vision and goals of the Comprehensive Plan and be consistent with the policies established by this document.

## Chapter 5: Implementation Work Program

Successful implementation of the Plan results from many individual actions by the County, other jurisdictions and service providers, and private decision-makers over the course of many years. The goals and policies describe what the community wants to become and how decision-makers should respond to varied circumstances. To accomplish the plan's goals and the Community Vision, the County will need to accomplish many tasks throughout the life of the plan. Key strategies will be used to accomplish the Plan's goals in the initial years of plan implementation. While most of the items on the list will be carried out by the County, some items may require coordination with its Towns, other service providers, or economic development entities.

The work program:

- Correlates implementation measures with specific Comprehensive Plan goals and policies;
- Sets a general time frame to carry out each strategy;
- Identifies action tools (*i.e.*, existing and proposed codes, ordinances, regulations, standards, requirements and policies) to implement action items; and
- Assigns responsibility for implementing the action items and lists other entities that should be involved in the process.

The work program is not intended to be an exhaustive list of all strategies that will implement the Plan. The County may pursue different strategies and adjust priorities, depending on changing opportunities and resources. The County should update this work program on an annual basis, adjusting the Short-Term Work Plan and tasks that are included in each year's budgeted work programs.

### 5.1 Short-Term Work Program

A Short-Term Work Program should be developed and reviewed on an annual basis to identify the previous year's accomplishments, to modify the work program tasks and to establish a reasonable timeline for key plan implementation tasks. A listing of short term projects and activities can provide the following information for elected and appointed decision-makers:

- **Project/Activity** - identifies the task as depicted in the Long Term Work Program and describes the project, action or document necessary to carry-out the strategy.
- **Timeline** - the project timeline based on the annual budget cycle.

- **Responsible Party** - the estimated budget cycle or cycles in which the task will be included within the Capital Improvements Program or special projects budget.
- **Cost Estimate** - the estimated costs of the project or activity. The costs estimates should be reviewed and revised on an annual basis.
- **Funding Source** - the local, state, federal or other funding source proposed to finance the project or activity. Funding sources may include, but are not limited to: bonds, general revenues, sales tax revenues, impact fees, tax credits, dedicated fees, grants and loans.

## 5.2 Strategies Matrix

The Strategies Matrix, which serves as the long-term work plan, is intended to be the most dynamic component of the Plan. Through annual updates, the County can ensure that the Plan continues to serve the community effectively.

The **Implementation Strategies Matrix**, shown as **Exhibit 27**, schedules actions and recommends an initial work program. It should be updated annually to reflect community accomplishments, new approaches to community issues, changing conditions, shifting priorities and new demands. This list is not intended to be exhaustive or all inclusive. The County and other public and private entities will take numerous actions throughout the life of this plan to achieve the community goals. This list is intended to identify the highest priority tasks to be pursued over the next several years. The Exhibit identifies the goals related to each task, the timeframe for task completion, and the entities responsible for carrying out the tasks. Tasks that are not funded in the recommended years should be evaluated for removal from the list or to be shifted back for later implementation. Programs that are completed should be removed from the list.

The list of implementation strategies provides the following information in each column:

**Strategy Number** - the number of the implementation strategy to allow for future referencing of County activities.

**Action** - description of the specific strategy being recommended to implement the Plan.

**Priority/Schedule** - a ranking of importance based on its priority relative to other similarly-classed strategies. The ranking abbreviations are labeled in the following manner:

- 0** = This is an ongoing task and should continue.
- 1** = This is a critical task and should be undertaken as soon as possible.  
Necessary for immediate implementation of the Plan.  
To occur now.
- 2** = This is a very important task with a sense of urgency.  
Necessary to implement the Plan.  
To occur within two (2) years.
- 3** = This is an important task but there is no immediate sense of urgency.  
This task will help implement the Plan.  
To occur within five (5) years.
- 4** = This task will help implement the Plan but can be delayed in order to complete other more important tasks.  
To occur within ten (10) years.
- 5** = This task will help implement the Plan but it can be delayed indefinitely.  
To occur within twenty (20) years.

**Responsible Entity**- the person, department or agency that is primarily responsible for initiating, advocating and/or performing the strategy. Anticipating that some functions currently performed by County staff may be contracted to qualified consultants, references are made to function (*i.e.*, 'Planning' refers to tasks that are the responsibility of the County's planner or planning consultant). When multiple entities are identified, they are presented in order of responsibility for the task.

**Tool** - the document or action necessary to carry-out the strategy.

**Budgetary Impact** - indicates the relative fiscal impact of the specific strategy on the County's budget. The ranking abbreviations are labeled in the following manner:

Low = Little or no fiscal impact on the County's budget.

Mod = Moderate; some fiscal impact, but likely to be funded within one to two fiscal periods.

High = May be significant fiscal impact, depending on the nature of the capital investment, but may provide opportunities for the use of alternative revenue sources.

**Exhibit 27: Implementation Matrix**

Task	Action	Responsible Entity	Action Tool	Budgetary Impact	Capital Item
<b>On-Going Tasks</b>					
0.01	Support the Page County Water Quality Advisory Committee.	Planning Director, Environmental Services, County Administrator	Budget	Low	No
0.02	Offer technical assistance and advice to encourage new and existing business activities.	Economic Development Authority	Outreach	Low	No
0.03	Support the County Economic Development Authority (EDA) and provide the fiscal resources necessary to allow the EDA to play an active role in business recruitment and development.	County Administrator	Budget	Low	No
0.04	Create an inventory of suitable properties to identify opportunities for future business development and available ready-to-go business sites County-wide in cooperation with the Virginia Economic Development Partnership (VEDP).	Economic Development Authority, Planning Director	Economic Development Plan	Low	No
0.05	Establish a Page County economic development program, focused on services and activities, designed to support the retention and growth of existing county businesses.	Economic Development Authority	Economic Development Plan	Moderate	No
0.06	Coordinate County economic development activities within a single agency charged with promoting the economic health of the community	County Administrator, Economic Development Authority	Economic Development Plan	Low	No

Task	Action	Responsible Entity	Action Tool	Budgetary Impact	Capital Item
0.07	Develop and implement a fiscal impact analysis for use when incentives are considered to attract economic development.	Economic Development Authority, Finance Director	Fiscal Impact Analysis	Moderate	No
0.08	Initiate a “business visitation” program as part of a Luray-Page County Chamber of Commerce “business after-hours” program that includes a presentation and a reception.	Economic Development Authority	Outreach	Low	No
0.09	Seek grant opportunities and other fiscal and tax incentives that can be used to facilitate new business opportunities in the County.	County Administrator, Economic Development Authority	Outreach, Budget	Low	No
<b>Priority 1</b>					
1.01	Adopt a LESA system that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Establishes standards and factors to determine development appropriateness.</li> <li>b. Requires development within defined Community Service Areas to be consistent with applicable Town plans and ordinances.</li> </ul>	Planning Director, GIS	Development Regulations	Low	No
1.02	Draft and adopt a Unified Development Code, consistent with the updated Plan, to reflect land division, use districts and performance standards, incorporating all of the County's development regulations, including subdivision, zoning, floodplain and other relevant ordinances. The UDC should include all of the following provisions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Require notification to non-farm developments of the rural characteristics of the area and require non-farm development to provide adequate buffering and separation between non-farm and farm development.</li> </ul>	Planning Director, County Administrator, County Attorney	Development Regulations	Moderate	No

Task	Action	Responsible Entity	Action Tool	Budgetary Impact	Capital Item
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>b. Correlate future land use categories and zoning districts.</li> <li>c. Provide for administrative exceptions and conditional use provisions for current cabin owners so they may better maintain their structures and conform to Flood Plain development regulations.</li> <li>d. Provide for the repair and maintenance of legal non-conforming structures.</li> <li>e. Provide that criteria for rezoning to commercial and industrial districts that are consistent with Plan criteria.</li> <li>f. Establish design standards for “rural villages” that also provides for mixed use development.</li> <li>g. Establish consistency between town and County land use plans.</li> <li>h. Establish standards for a variety of housing types and lot sizes.</li> <li>i. Incorporate best management practices and establish storm water improvement requirements to reduce soil erosion and protect potable water wells.</li> <li>j. Evaluate an Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance (APFO) to require that adequate public facilities be provided at the time development occurs.</li> <li>k. Identify alternatives for on-site sewage treatment facilities and water systems.</li> <li>l. Establish vehicle and pedestrian access standards.</li> <li>m. Establish buffering and compatibility standards.</li> <li>n. Incorporate fairness principals and other growth policies established in the Plan.</li> </ul>				

Task	Action	Responsible Entity	Action Tool	Budgetary Impact	Capital Item
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="338 277 1136 342">o. Evaluate a development rights transfer program that is consistent with the Plan's goals, objectives and policies.</li> <li data-bbox="338 367 1136 431">p. Establish criteria for prioritizing capital improvements so that public investments support adopted goals and objectives.</li> <li data-bbox="338 456 1136 521">q. Provide school boards with the opportunity to comment on all major subdivision proposals.</li> <li data-bbox="338 545 1136 651">r. Consider adoption of farm easements and other strategies to protect farmers from potential nuisance suits from non-farm development.</li> <li data-bbox="338 675 1136 781">s. Increase public awareness of zoning, building, floodplain, watershed and emergency management provisions, their purpose, and benefits.</li> <li data-bbox="338 805 1136 943">t. Enhance the visual appeal of non-residential and non-ag uses through design and performance standards that promote and protect the aesthetic quality of gateways, viewsheds and high visibility corridors.</li> <li data-bbox="338 967 1136 1154">u. Establish design and performance standards to enhance and protect the aesthetic quality of gateways and other high visibility corridors, including guidelines for parking, access, orientation of buildings, lighting, signage, intensity, storage, display landscaping and buffers.</li> <li data-bbox="338 1179 1136 1365">v. Provide for a coordinated system of use districts, including:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="432 1235 611 1268">i. Agriculture</li> <li data-bbox="432 1292 684 1325">ii. Rural Residential</li> <li data-bbox="432 1349 1104 1382">iii. Neighborhood Residential (Low, Moderate and High)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>				

Task	Action	Responsible Entity	Action Tool	Budgetary Impact	Capital Item
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>iv. Rural Business</li> <li>v. Neighborhood Business</li> <li>vi. Regional Business</li> <li>vii. Business Park / Light Industrial</li> <li>viii. Industrial</li> <li>w. Provide opportunities for specific purpose overlay districts, including but not limited to:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Cluster Subdivision</li> <li>ii. Conservation Subdivision</li> <li>iii. Planned Development</li> </ul> </li> <li>x. Define an Incorporated Areas Tier to:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Discourage large lot development;</li> <li>ii. Permit urban and suburban uses; and</li> <li>iii. Require full urban services.</li> </ul> </li> <li>y. Define Community Service Area Tiers to:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Discourage large lot development.</li> <li>ii. Permit urban and suburban uses if necessary public facilities are available.</li> <li>iii. Require transitions (buffers) between urban/suburban uses and rural/ag uses.</li> <li>iv. Establish rural and urban levels of service.</li> <li>v. Prohibit new private water/sewer unless a development</li> </ul> </li> </ul>				

Task	Action	Responsible Entity	Action Tool	Budgetary Impact	Capital Item
	<p>agreement guarantees that development will be designed to connect to a public system when one becomes available and commits to full participation in the public system.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>vi. Require that new development fund the full cost of facilities and services.</li> <li>vii. Apply each Town's respective development standards, design guidelines and level of service standards for urban/suburban development, while the County retains jurisdiction for development review.</li> </ul> <p>z. Define an Agricultural Protection Tier to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Accommodate large lot rural development and agricultural uses.</li> <li>ii. Limit non-residential uses to primarily those serving the needs of residents in the surrounding agricultural / rural areas and agriculture-related uses.</li> <li>iii. Consider low-density suburban subdivisions and low intensity employment centers if access is adequate and the use is compatible with surrounding ag/rural development.</li> <li>iv. Require the level of service to be appropriate to the density / intensity of new development while generally applying rural level of service throughout the Agricultural Protection Tier.</li> </ul> <p>aa. Define an Environmental Protection Tier to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Only allow development if it does not negatively affect</li> </ul>				

Task	Action	Responsible Entity	Action Tool	Budgetary Impact	Capital Item
	<p>key environmental and natural resources.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ii. Consider compatible low-density residential or recreational uses.</li> <li>iii. Minimize disruption of natural open space in the provision of public services.</li> <li>iv. Require that public services meet the needs of planned land uses while protecting the identified environmental resources.</li> <li>v. Strongly discourage the construction of wastewater treatment plants, lift stations, and other potential sources of water pollution upstream of water resources.</li> </ul> <p>bb. Define a rural/minor subdivision process to protect and preserve agriculture and the environment in accordance with the following guidelines:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Establish provisions that allow 1.75 acre lots, but require development of a rural/minor subdivision for the development of four or more contiguous or adjoining lots.</li> <li>ii. Establish a “short form” or administrative approval process for rural/minor subdivisions that ensures basic rural development standards, such as establishing driveway access and separation standards, and identifying and reserving short- and long-term right-of-way and access needs.</li> <li>iii. Require contiguity of splits in anticipation that if such</li> </ul>				

Task	Action	Responsible Entity	Action Tool	Budgetary Impact	Capital Item
	<p>occur in the future, lot design, agriculture easements and infrastructure planning and budgeting can occur.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>iv. Prohibit non-contiguous splits.</li> </ul> <p>cc. Define a major subdivision process to ensure quality development consistent with adopted lot standards that is served by adequate public facilities and services in accordance with the following guidelines:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Establish a “Sketch Plan” procedure to show consistency with adopted Plans and regulations, phasing plans and general project impacts to environment and public facilities and services.</li> <li>ii. Establish a Preliminary and Final Plat procedure to show all substantive aspects of a proposed subdivision and ensure provision of adequate and safe access, provision of right-of-way, adequate drainage, adequate public facilities and services, acceptable parcel, lot and land layout, and other adopted standards.</li> </ul> <p>dd. Establish standards for family transfers in accordance with the following guidelines:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Ensure that family transfers comply with basic rural development standards.</li> <li>ii. Ensure that transfers are for immediate family and that the process is not being used to circumvent the established rule of law. Possible tools may include the use of affidavits for both seller and purchaser, minimum ownership period by purchaser before subsequent transfer and/or proof of compliance with IRS</li> </ul>				

Task	Action	Responsible Entity	Action Tool	Budgetary Impact	Capital Item
	<p>requirements for gifts.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>iii. Establish a maximum number of family transfer splits per parcel.</li> </ul> <p>ee. Establish standards to allow for conservation subdivisions and planned unit developments, subject to conformance with the following open space requirements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. At least 50% of the entire development area must be retained in common open space.</li> <li>ii. The open space shall be commonly owned and controlled through a homeowners' association (HOA) agreement, provided that title to such open space be held by the HOA or by a public or non-profit entity, for conservation or recreational purposes.</li> <li>iii. Utilities, including water, wastewater, storm water, electricity, gas or communications may be located within the open space.</li> <li>iv. Accessory structures that are commonly used and controlled by the HOA are allowed in the open space.</li> <li>v. The HOA may lease the open space for agricultural use, but must adopt limitations on nuisance suits that can be brought against the agricultural operator.</li> </ul> <p>ff. Amend the Floodplain Conservation District in the Zoning Ordinance to reflect protecting property rights, establishing reasonable and specific development and design standards in designated floodplains and discouraging new uses in hazardous floodplain areas.</p> <p>gg. Development and design standards for non-residential (non-ag) uses shall include guidelines for parking, access, orientation of buildings, lighting, signage, density, outdoor storage and display, landscaping and buffers and other aesthetic</p>				

Task	Action	Responsible Entity	Action Tool	Budgetary Impact	Capital Item
	<p>considerations.</p> <p>hh. Amend signage regulations to reduce the number and size of signs and encourage high quality signage that is attractive, appropriate for the location and balances visibility needs with aesthetic needs.</p> <p>ii. Manage densities within the rural and agricultural areas of the county, by using techniques such as conservation subdivisions, to protect groundwater resources.</p>				
1.03	Identify opportunities for 'turn key' or ready-to-build development sites, compatible with the County's goals and policies, to encourage the attraction or expansion of businesses.	Economic Development Authority	Outreach	Low	No
1.04	Develop and support a vigorous agricultural development program in Page County.	Economic Development Authority	Budget	Low	No
1.05	Develop land use policies that protect groundwater resources	Planning Director, Environmental Service, County Engineer	Development Regulations	Moderate	No
1.06	Develop a detailed future land use map to guide land use and development decisions that illustrates the location and type of future land uses.	Planning Director	Comprehensive Plan, Future Land Use Map	Moderate	No
1.07	Expand the County's integrated geographic information system (GIS) network, including computer hardware, software, data and personnel, designed to efficiently capture, store, update, manipulate, analyze, display and share geographically referenced information, to include an enhanced parcel database that:	Planning Director, GIS Coordinator	Geographic Information Systems	Moderate	No

Task	Action	Responsible Entity	Action Tool	Budgetary Impact	Capital Item
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Incorporate zoning and land use to parcel features. Data on parcel size, utility capacity, service jurisdictions, ownership, zoning, location and other relevant information shall be included.</li> <li>b. Attach additional data, as it becomes available, to parcel features.</li> <li>c. Incorporates the appraisal/assessed database, including improvement value, land value and land use.</li> <li>d. Update town boundaries and connect to parcel and road features.</li> <li>e. Incorporate the LBCS (Land-Based Classification Standard) to the parcel database.</li> <li>f. Utilize inexpensive software add-ins or extensions to GIS software.</li> <li>g. Incorporate available state or federal data and standards.</li> <li>h. Coordinate with local, Regional, State and Federal GIS councils and organizations.</li> <li>i. Create a Public internet mapping website.</li> <li>j. Monitor the supply and status of land.</li> <li>k. Establish and maintain a tracking system for existing, approved and planned land supplies.</li> <li>l. Promote GIS services to the realty and developer communities.</li> <li>m. Seek guidance from the County Attorney regarding liability and other legal issues regarding privacy, data sharing requirements and database error responsibility.</li> <li>n. Develop a data sharing policy with a standard set of rules for</li> </ul>				

Task	Action	Responsible Entity	Action Tool	Budgetary Impact	Capital Item
	dealing with data requests from public, sharing data with other county agencies, share data with other jurisdictions.				
1.08	Establish Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance (APFO) requirements for developers to provide facilities necessitated by new development.	Planning Director, County Engineer	APFO, Development Regulations	Moderate	No
1.09	Develop and adopt subdivision road standards consistent with VDOT's subdivision street requirements for all types of division of land.	Planning Director, County Engineer	Development Regulations	Moderate	No
1.10	Designate Critical Environmental Areas and develop standards to protect these areas from potential adverse impacts of development.	Planning Director, Environmental Services	Development Regulations	Low	No
1.11	Coordinate with regional agriculture protection and agriculture development programs, including counties with transfer of development rights programs, such as Clark, Shenandoah, and Frederick Counties.	Economic Development Authority	Outreach	Low	No
1.12	Develop land use policies that limit the construction of structures, waste storage, or sewage treatment systems within defined Karst terrain or sinkhole drainage areas.	Planning Director, County Engineer	Development Regulations	Low	No
1.13	Prohibit intensive development in those areas that are not suitable for on-site sewage disposal and cannot be tied to sewage lines.	Planning Director, County Engineer, Environmental Services	Development Regulations	Low	No
1.14	Evaluate the County's existing land use plan and zoning map to ensure that adequate land areas exist to support the future expansion of land uses devoted to tourism or general retail uses.	Planning Director, Economic Development Authority, Tourism Council	Annual Review, Comprehensive Plan	Low	No

Task	Action	Responsible Entity	Action Tool	Budgetary Impact	Capital Item
1.15	Coordinate with the Page County EDA to review the goals, policies and strategies of the Comprehensive Plan related to economic development on an annual basis and recommend changes as necessary to reflect changing economic conditions and emerging economic priorities.	Planning Director, Economic Development Authority	Annual Review, Comprehensive Plan	Low	No
1.16	Coordinate with the incorporated Towns to provide sewer & water service to land adjacent to the towns that is within designated growth areas.	Planning Director, County Administrator, County Attorney	IGA, Outreach	Low	No
1.17	To facilitate the future improvements of secondary six-year plans, VDOT and the County should review all land subdivisions and subdivision plans for right of way dedication on unimproved roadways.	Planning Director, County Engineer, VDOT	Development Review	Low	No
1.18	Periodically review and update right-of-way and setback requirements to allow for roadway improvements and corridor management.	Planning Director, County Engineer	Development Regulations	Low	No
1.19	Identify and map all watersheds, floodways and floodplains in the County and begin dialogue with property owners and relevant local, state and federal agencies on watershed and flood protection measures.	Planning Director, County Engineer	Development Regulations	Moderate	No
1.20	Develop an outreach program to inform the public of the benefits of agricultural preservation.	Planning Director, Environmental Services	Outreach	Low	No
1.21	Establish resource conservation overlay districts along major rivers and streams, particularly Hawksbill Creek, Pass Run, Mill Creek...etc. based on Watershed Management Plans as they are completed and recommended by the Water Quality Advisory Committee and approved by the County.	Planning Director, Environmental Services	Development Regulations	Moderate	No
1.22	Establish zoning districts to protect open space and encourage low impact development and green infrastructure principles.	Planning Director, County	Development Regulations	Moderate	No

Task	Action	Responsible Entity	Action Tool	Budgetary Impact	Capital Item
		Engineer			
1.23	Identify appropriate locations for employment-generating land uses.	Planning Director, Economic Development Authority	Future Land Use Map	Moderate	No
1.24	Actively promote tourism as a suitable and appropriate form of economic development and foster cooperation among tourist related organizations and businesses, such as antique and craft shops, art galleries, B&B's, inns, lodges, motels and restaurants.	Tourism Council	Outreach	Low	No
1.25	Coordinate with the Towns to pursue the establishment of Enterprise Zones, Technology Zones and other state and federal incentive programs to revitalize existing commercial and industrial areas and attract new and desirable enterprises to designated growth areas.	Economic Development Authority	Grants, Outreach	Low	No
1.26	Market Page County as a tourism destination in cooperation with the Luray-Page County Chamber of Commerce.	Tourism Council	Outreach	Moderate	No
1.27	Ensure that the County has a cost efficient computer system, including software, which is compatible with the systems of other Counties, the state and the federal government and provides easy access to public information by County citizens.	County Administrator	Budget	Moderate	No
<b>Priority 2</b>					
2.01	Adopt and execute Intergovernmental Agreements with the participating Towns to coordinate development and infrastructure decisions and processes that provide for, but are not limited to, the following:  a. Establish mutually-agreed upon criteria for Minimum Levels of Services to be provided at the time of development.	County Administrator, County Attorney, Planning Director	IGA, Outreach	Low	No

Task	Action	Responsible Entity	Action Tool	Budgetary Impact	Capital Item
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>b. Define minimum criteria to ensure plan consistency.</li> <li>c. Identify the process for updating the provisions of the Agreement, including criteria to adjust Community Service Area boundaries. Such criteria shall consider actual and projected growth, planned infrastructure improvements and other factors affecting future growth of the applicable Town.</li> <li>d. Establish a process for arbitration of the disputes regarding interpretation of the Plan, map and/or agreements to avoid litigation between Towns and the County.</li> <li>e. Provide for notification to the County prior to annexation and, to the extent possible, describe the phasing of potential annexations.</li> <li>f. Provide a mechanism for review of applications for land use map amendments and changes in zoning within the Community Service Area Tiers.</li> <li>g. Initiate discussions with each of the three towns on the development of organizational agreements that would establish terms and conditions of utility extensions from the town into the County.</li> <li>h. Describe the extent of the mutually agreed upon extra-territorial authority of towns. Generally, the County will retain approval authority and provide towns the opportunity to administratively determine if an application is consistent with adopted plans and regulations. Formal town approval may be sought for applications that are not deemed to be consistent with adopted plans and regulations.</li> </ul>				

Task	Action	Responsible Entity	Action Tool	Budgetary Impact	Capital Item
2.02	Establish historic overlay districts and corridors to protect recognized properties and areas of historic and archeological value and surrounding areas.	Planning Director	Development Regulations	Moderate	No
2.03	Analyze Page County export opportunities created by the Virginia Inland Port.	Economic Development Authority	Economic Development Plan	Low	No
2.04	Assess the County's telecommunications infrastructure with focus on the location and capacity of the facilities.	County Engineer, Planning Director	Specific Plan	Low	No
2.05	Work in partnership with telecommunication providers to provide and expand services to meet the needs of existing and prospective businesses.	Economic Development Authority, County Administrator, Planning Director	Outreach	Low	No
2.06	Identify needed transportation improvements and establish priorities for those improvements.	Planning Director, County Engineer, VDOT	CIP	Low	No
2.07	Promote historic preservation programs.	Planning Director	Outreach	Low	No
2.08	Develop programs to protect open spaces, such as voluntary placement of conservation easements or the transfer/sale of development rights.	County Administrator, Planning Director	Development Regulations	Moderate	No
2.09	Explore and develop markets for Page County's agricultural products.	Economic Development Authority	Economic Development Plan	Low	No

Task	Action	Responsible Entity	Action Tool	Budgetary Impact	Capital Item
2.10	Locate and document natural resources in the county that require special attention such as, sink holes, wetlands, springs, rare endangered and/or-threatened species and their habitats.	Environmental Services	Budget, Specific Plan	Low	No
2.11	Develop performance standards to encourage land uses with minimal adverse environmental impacts.	Planning Director, Environmental Services	Development Regulations	Low	No
2.12	Recruit non-polluting businesses and light industry and locate them in designated growth areas.	Economic Development Authority	Economic Development Plan	Low	No
2.13	Identify community priorities for business recruitment and the expenditure of local economic development resources.	Economic Development Authority	Economic Development Plan	Low	No
2.14	Initiate discussions with the Page County School Board and school administration on the benefits and potential for providing expanded vocational-technical skills training in the County schools and on the potential to allow expanded community use of the Page County Vo-Tech Center for adult education and Vo-Tech training opportunities.	County Administrator	Outreach	Low	No
2.15	Coordinate with the County, Towns and VDOT on matters related to planning and programming, improvements and transportation systems management.	Planning Director, County Engineer	Outreach	Low	No
2.16	Improve partnership with VDOT on the preparation and implementation of the County's six-year secondary road plan.	Planning Director, County Engineer	Outreach	Low	No
<b>Priority 3</b>					
3.01	Develop a tax incentive program to encourage and assist property owners to adaptively restore and reuse their older buildings or historic structures.	County Administrator, Finance Director	Budget, Outreach	Moderate	No

Task	Action	Responsible Entity	Action Tool	Budgetary Impact	Capital Item
3.02	Provide information regarding tax incentives, designation procedures, design guidelines, and appropriate rehabilitation guidelines for historic preservation.	Planning Director	Outreach	Low	No
3.03	Coordinate with local and regional tourism organizations, business associations, downtown associations and economic development agencies to promote tourism in the County.	Tourism Council	Outreach, Economic Development Plan	Low	No
3.04	Develop a plan for managing and preserving historic and archaeological resources.	Planning Director	Specific Plan	Low	No
3.05	Develop and implement ordinances that minimize the adverse environmental impacts of activities directly or indirectly related to new construction. These may include ground disturbance, removal of trees, altering drainage, grading, filling, etc.	Planning Director, Environmental Services	Development Regulations	Moderate	No
3.06	Adopt provisions that allow for flexibility in development and encourage the use of low-impact design elements, Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) standards and Green Infrastructure principles and techniques.	Planning Director, County Engineer, County Attorney	Development Regulations	Moderate	No
3.07	Establish municipal and private wellhead protection areas.	County Engineer, Planning Director, County Attorney	Development Regulations	Low	No
3.08	Undertake a target market study to identify the industry sectors and business types that are most conducive to locating in Page County.	Economic Development Authority	Economic Development Plan	Low	No
3.09	Fund the local business incentive fund that can be used to encourage the location of new businesses or the expansion or retention of existing businesses.	Economic Development Authority	Budget	Moderate	No
3.10	Support opportunities for partnerships between the County and the school district.	County Administrator	Outreach, IGA	Low	No

Task	Action	Responsible Entity	Action Tool	Budgetary Impact	Capital Item
3.11	Work cooperatively with the towns on the preparation of grant and loan applications designed to facilitate maintenance of existing facilities and facilitate expansion of utilities into the County.	Planning Director, County Engineer	Outreach, Grants	Low	No
3.12	Explore the long-term feasibility and cost-benefit of providing County water and/or sewer services either through the creation of a public service authority or other organizational arrangement.	County Administrator, County Attorney	Facilities Plan	Moderate	No
3.13	Contact local employers to provide information regarding available vocational-technical training opportunities, and obtain information on specific skill training needed.	Economic Development Authority	Outreach	Low	No
3.14	Work with the School District to develop a middle school system in the County, including planning to estimate middle school needs and development costs.	County Administrator	Outreach	Low	No
3.15	The County and State should work together along with local citizens and stakeholders to implement Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS) for any major road improvements.	Planning Director, County Engineer, VDOT	Outreach	Low	No
3.16	Initiate and continue discussions with neighboring jurisdictions and interested citizens on the appropriate improvements for Route 340.	County Engineer, Planning Director	Outreach, IGA	Low	No
3.17	Formally explore with local VDOT personnel the feasibility of funding safety improvements to all of the County's transportation infrastructure.	County Administrator, Planning Director, County Engineer, VDOT	Outreach	Low	No
3.18	Work with General Assembly representatives, the Commonwealth Transportation Board and local VDOT personnel to advocate accelerated funding for long term improvements to Route 340.	County Administrator	Outreach	Low	No

Task	Action	Responsible Entity	Action Tool	Budgetary Impact	Capital Item
3.19	Provide additional recreational activities for youth.	Recreation Director	Budget	Moderate	No
<b>Priority 4</b>					
4.01	Identify sites and areas that are eligible for listing on the State and National Registers of Historic Places.	Planning Director	Historic Preservation Plan	Low	No
4.02	Pursue the establishment of State and National Historic Districts, especially in rural areas, to officially recognize the historical significance and value of an area.	Planning Director	Historic Preservation Plan	Low	No
4.03	A countywide archaeological survey should be completed to identify sites and areas that are eligible for listing on the State and National Registers.	Planning Director	Historic Preservation Plan	Low	No
4.04	Coordinate with local and regional tourism organizations, business associations, downtown associations and economic development agencies to promote tourism in the County.	Economic Development Authority, Tourism Council	Outreach	Low	No
4.05	Provide facilities to meet existing and anticipated community cultural needs.	Parks & Rec. Director, Planning Director, County Administrator	CIP, Budget	High	Yes
4.06	Establish lighting standards that protect the night sky from light pollution, particularly as it impacts Shenandoah National Park and George Washington National Forest.	Planning Director	Development Regulations	Low	No
4.07	Develop preservation programs such as scenic easements, land purchase, tax incentives, and federal and state grants-in-aid to achieve water quality, open space and other environmental objectives.	Planning Director, Environmental Services	Development Regulations, IGA	Moderate	No

Task	Action	Responsible Entity	Action Tool	Budgetary Impact	Capital Item
4.08	Increase citizen involvement in restoration and monitoring projects and watershed planning activities.	Environmental Services	Outreach	Low	No
4.09	Conduct a comprehensive examination of the county's water resources and develop specific strategies to protect them.	Environmental Services	Water Plan	Low	No
4.10	Educate the public of the values and benefits of preserving the river and stream corridors.	Environmental Services	Outreach	Low	No
4.11	Educate and involve citizens in promoting environmental stewardship of natural resources and watershed protection.	Environmental Services	Outreach	Low	No
4.12	Study the potential for the establishment of federal or state Wildlife Refuges, Recreation Areas, scenic road designations or scenic river designations on the Shenandoah River as tourist attractions that would have potential economic benefits for the County.	Environmental Services, Planning Director, Tourism Council	Specific Plan	Low	No
4.13	Assess the current location and usage of all rail sidings within the County and identify the potential for future rail siding locations.	Planning Director, County Administrator, County Engineer	Specific Plan	Low	No
4.14	Identify potential industrial sites along Route 340 in the northern portion of the County, and the compatibility of these sites with the County's Comprehensive Plan.	Planning Director, Economic Development Authority	Future Land Use Map, Economic Development Plan	Low	No
4.15	Identify grant opportunities and other fiscal and tax incentives that can be used to facilitate new business opportunities in the County.	Economic Development Authority	Budget, Economic Development Plan	Low	No
4.16	Seek adequate and timely funding for workforce development and training needs.	Economic Development Authority	Economic Development Plan, Budget	Low	No

Task	Action	Responsible Entity	Action Tool	Budgetary Impact	Capital Item
4.17	Monitor and take advantage of state and federal grant opportunities designed to foster business development and expansion.	Economic Development Authority	Grants, Economic Development Plan	Low	No
4.18	Educate the general public on the importance of the bike-walkway system and its safe use.	Parks & Rec. Director	Outreach	Low	No
4.19	Support the activities and efforts of the Page County Historic Preservation Commission.	Planning Director, Tourism Council	Outreach, Budget	Low	No
<b>Priority 5</b>					
5.01	Develop a promotional brochure showcasing the County's historic resources.	Tourism Council, Planning Director	Historic Preservation Plan, Budget	Low	No
5.02	Develop a local historic plaque program.	Planning Director	Historic Preservation Plan, Budget	Low	No

Task	Action	Responsible Entity	Action Tool	Budgetary Impact	Capital Item
5.03	Develop a self-guided driving tour of the County's historic landmarks.	Tourism Council	Historic Preservation Plan, Budget	Low	No
5.04	Develop innovative ways to protect and promote the economic and cultural importance of historic and archaeological resources.	Planning Director, Economic Development Authority, Tourism Council	Budget, Specific Plan	Low	No
5.05	Support the provision of cultural facilities and public art.	Parks & Rec. Director	Budget	Low	No
5.06	Improve the management of publicly owned lands along the Shenandoah River by providing amenities such as sanitation facilities and ground maintenance.	Environmental Services, Parks & Rec. Director	Budget, CIP	Moderate / High	Yes
5.07	Establish and maintain a countywide groundwater monitoring network through annual voluntary testing of private residential wells.	Environmental Services	Budget, Specific Plan	Low	No
5.08	Participate in federal, state, and regional groundwater protection programs.	Environmental Services	Outreach	Low	No
5.09	Form partnerships with school districts and other organizations to promote environmental education and help Page County citizens understand the function and importance of natural resources and watershed protection to their daily lives.	Environmental Services	Outreach	Low	No
5.10	Develop public-private partnerships for the development of business sites within the County.	Economic Development Authority	Outreach, Economic Development Plan	Low	No

Task	Action	Responsible Entity	Action Tool	Budgetary Impact	Capital Item
5.11	Prepare and submit an Enterprise Zone application during the next available application cycle.	Economic Development Authority	Budget	Low	No
5.12	Extend the County's designation as a federal Highly Underutilized Business (HUB) zone, so that businesses within the zone can accrue the benefits of the designation when pursuing federal contracts.	Economic Development Authority	Budget	Low	No
5.13	Monitor and pursue all appropriate federal (including Economic Development Administration) and state grant and loan opportunities that are consistent with local funding needs and economic development activities.	Economic Development Authority	Grants	Low	No
5.14	Survey of local businesses to ascertain needs, problems and general perceptions of business climate.	Economic Development Authority	Economic Development Plan, Outreach	Low	No
5.15	Survey local businesses on supplier locations and products purchased, and use information to ascertain feasibility of recruiting common suppliers to the Page County region.	Economic Development Authority	Outreach, Economic Development Plan	Low	No
5.16	Provide information to businesses on local, state and federal resources that are available to assist with business development and operation using existing published sources.	Economic Development Authority	Outreach	Low	No
5.17	Explore the capital facilities and other resources necessary to expand GED attainment within the County's adult population.	County Administrator, Economic Development Authority	Budget	Low	No
5.18	Explore and support local and regional funding initiatives to provide an enhanced technology infrastructure at local and regional workforce training centers.	County Administrator, Economic Development Authority	Budget	Moderate	No

Task	Action	Responsible Entity	Action Tool	Budgetary Impact	Capital Item
5.19	Monitor federal and state programs that provide funding for workforce development and retraining needs.	Economic Development Authority	Grants	Low	No
5.20	Contact federal and state legislative representatives and advocate the timely release of available funding devoted to workforce development and training.	County Administrator, Economic Development Authority	Outreach	Low	No
5.21	Revise County zoning standards pertaining to telecommunications facilities to ensure that such standards do not unreasonably restrict the construction of facilities in the County.	Planning Director	Development Regulations	Moderate	No
5.22	Plan to construct a bike-walkway system that is sensitive to the recreational rider, pedestrians and the area through which is constructed.	Parks & Rec. Director, Planning Director, County Engineer	CIP, Budget	High	Yes
5.23	Review opportunities for State and Federal funding of bike- walkway projects, i.e. Transportation Efficiency Act 21.	Parks & Rec. Director, County Engineer, Planning Director	Budget, Grants	Low	No
5.24	Pursue construction of bike-walkways through private and public funding that are cost efficient to build and maintain.	Parks & Rec. Director	CIP, Budget, Specific Plan	Moderate	Yes
5.25	Improve the airport's runway and road system and monitor all grant opportunities available for future needed improvements.	Airport Commission	Grants, CIP	High	Yes