

CHAPTER 3¹ LAND USE PLAN

A. PURPOSE OF THE LAND USE PLAN

The Land Use Plan is that component of the Comprehensive Plan that establishes policies on the future use of land. It contains two types of documents. First, a "Future Land Use Plan Map" is prepared which delineates several potential development conditions that may be expected over a period of time. Accompanying the Land Use Plan Map is a set of general development policies for each classification shown on the Plan. After the Land Use Plan has been adopted by the Board of Supervisors, it has the following clearly defined functions:

1. It represents the vision community leaders have for future use and development of land within the County. That vision is expressed in the Future Land Use Plan Map and its accompanying land use policies.
2. The Land Use Plan serves as a guide to any change in character of individual properties as they change from one use to another over time.
3. It provides a rational basis for establishing zoning and other land use and development regulations.
4. It provides a broad set of policies that can be used in making public and private decisions on projects that come before the government.
5. It becomes a valuable tool of communication between citizens and the local government on matters concerning land use and development.

B. COMPONENTS OF THE LAND USE PLAN

The first step in developing a land use plan for Northumberland County is to identify a set of components that can be used as building blocks to define the fundamental structure of the plan. Each component has these qualities - it identifies a spacial area that can be delineated on the land use map and it establishes one or more general development or use policies for each area so designated. This section establishes four building blocks of the general Land Use Plan as follows²:

- Rural Uplands: that area of the county that lies landward from the topographic feature known as the "Suffolk Scarp" (see Figure 1.3) and which generally is above 50 feet in elevation above sea level.
- Rural Low Shelf: the remainder of the County lying seaward from the Suffolk Scarp and

¹filename = chapter3.3rd

²The protection of the Chesapeake Bay and other water quality issues is addressed in Chapter 5.

generally lying between zero and 50 feet above sea level.

space for the land use plan map

- Shoreline Conservation Area: an area extending from the edge of tidal waters 1,000 feet inland. This area overlaps both the Rural Low Shelf and the Rural Uplands in many places.
- Villages: areas of concentrated development that have become commercial hubs or areas of distinctive community identity.

The remainder of this section suggests general development policies that would be appropriate for each of these four areas. In addition to the specific policies stated below, all policies applicable to a Resource Protection Area or Resource Management Area under the Chesapeake Bay Regulations apply.

1. Policies for the **Rural Uplands**

a. Agricultural and Forested Areas

Agricultural areas are areas that are cultivated for crops or cleared for that purpose. Agricultural lands occupy about a third of the total area of Northumberland County - more than 60 square miles. **Forested lands** include lands used for growing timber commercially and woodlands that are part of family farms or other acreage. Forested lands comprise nearly half of the acreage of the County.

Recommended policies for agriculture and forested lands are as follows:

- (1) Agricultural and forested lands shall be managed to preserve the quality of these resources and minimize the potential degradation of water quality through improper operation. Agriculture and farming operations are to be conducted under a program designed to minimize water pollution. This policy may be implemented through:
 - (a) Best Management Practices: that promote an effective method of controlling point and nonpoint pollutant levels consistent with the State's environmental quality goals.
 - (b) Nutrient Management Practices: that provide optimum nutrient application rates, times and methods based on soil analysis results and expected crop yields.
 - (c) Soil and Water Conservation Plans: designed to reduce soil erosion and to prevent excessive levels of nutrients and pesticides from entering the groundwater and Chesapeake Bay.
- (2) The County will cooperate with the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality in the monitoring and enforcement of "Pollution Abatement Permits" for large animal raising operations.
- (3) Land used for commercial raising of animals on a large scale shall be in accordance with prevailing County policies.

³This is an estimate based on the following: 33 percent is in farmland; 11 percent is in commercial forests; between 5 and 10 percent is in development; and an undetermined (small) amount is in pastureland.

- (4) Conversion of forest lands into nonforest uses shall be done to minimize removal of existing forests. Commercial and industrial sites should be selected in areas most compatible with these policies.
 - (5) Where commercial forests are cut for sale, selective cutting of timber as an alternative to clear cutting is the preferred method as a means of minimizing potential soil erosion.
- b. Residential

Residential development in the Rural Uplands is a mixture of farm dwellings, random lots along public roads, and small subdivisions. Permanent dwelling types include both conventionally built single-family units and manufactured housing units established as permanent housing. In addition, there is a large number of "single-wide" mobile homes. While most of the latter are located on individual lots, some are in mobile home parks. Recommended policies for residential development in the Rural Uplands.

- (1) A primary farm dwelling that is located on the same farm is considered to be part of the farming use and is not subject to most residential development policies.
- (2) Subdivisions known as "family subdivisions" shall conform to the requirements of Va. Code Section 15.1-466,12.
- (3) The average lot size for new residential subdivisions shall be not less than one (1) acre but no single lot within such subdivisions shall have an area not less than three-fourths (3/4) of an acre.
- (4) Large residential subdivisions shall be planned to the extent possible so new lots front on new streets. Cul-de-sac streets and reverse-frontage lots are suggested alternatives to using a major highway for access to residential lots.
- (5) New residential subdivisions established on existing secondary roads shall provide more than the minimum frontage and additional area if necessary to minimize traffic hazards resulting from direct access of driveways to heavily-traveled roads.
- (6) Subdivisions developed along the banks or shores of non-tidal streams that empty into tidal streams shall be developed under the same performance standards as those that apply to the Resource Protection Area.

c. Commercial/Industrial

This group includes commercial or industrial use that lies outside the designated village

⁴This policy would reduce the number of new subdivision lots established along public roads and result in safer access to the residential units and a reduction in driveway cuts into major roads. The number of lots that would trigger this policy should be very small, perhaps three lots.

areas. They include the following types: (1) random retail or service businesses located along primary highways but outside village areas; (2) country or convenience stores established on secondary roads serving local communities; or (3) random industrial uses.

- (1) The preferred location for retail and service businesses that are intended to serve a large sector of the County's population and which are likely to generate considerable traffic is in the areas designated as villages.
- (2) Country stores and convenience stores intended to serve only a local community within the County are expected to be located at random locations throughout the Rural Uplands and preferably near intersections of feeder roads to the residential communities to be served.
- (3) Industrial sites are best located in areas which have facilities that are designed to serve industry and where they do not cause adverse impact to adjoining uses. Industrial sites must have access to good public roads, have adequate water supply and wastewater disposal capability. At present, the only area equipped with both utilities is the Reedville area. Smaller industries and "cottage industries", however could locate anywhere in the County where soils and water supply are favorable.

2. Policies for the **Rural Low Shelf**

This area lies seaward of the Suffolk Scarp but overlaps the Shoreline Conservation Area, the next classification. The official name of this area is "the low marine terrace." It ranges generally from 10 to 15 feet above sea level but may extend in places up to 50 feet. Development in the area is now and is expected to be about the same as that in the Rural Uplands described above. A few waterfront subdivisions have streets and lots that extend into this area but most of the waterfront development falls within the Shoreline Conservation Area.

This shelf has extensive areas where the soil is unsuited for septic tanks (Figure 1.4); a high shrink-swell ratio (Figure 1.5); and a high water table (Figure 1.10). As was the case with the rural uplands, development of subdivisions with small lots fronting along existing roads should be avoided because they decrease the rural qualities of the area and increase traffic hazards. Because of the high water table, streams and the underground water supply are more vulnerable to pollutants for streams than in the higher lands. Development should be done carefully in areas with poor soils as well as areas with steeper slopes.

Policies for development and use of land on the Rural Low Shelf are generally the same as those described for the Rural Uplands. Additional policies or exceptions follow:

- (a) Development is intended to be a general mix of low-density residential and agricultural. Residential development should be dispersed or arranged in clusters to avoid excessive development along existing road frontage.
- (b) Development near streams should avoid steep slopes and avoid excessive removal of natural vegetation.
- (c) New subdivisions with larger lots are encouraged.

- (d) Heavy water users should use deep wells.
- (e) Large scale commercial raising of animals is discouraged.
- (f) Except for country stores and convenience stores, commercial and industrial sites are not expected to be established in this area.
- (g) Large subdivisions shall be served by a public water system supplied from deep wells.
- (h) The average lot size for new residential subdivisions shall be not less than one (1) acre but no single lot within such subdivisions shall have an area not less than three-fourths (3/4) of an acre.

3. Policies for the **Shoreline Conservation Area**

The Shoreline Conservation Area extends approximately 1,000 feet from the sea level waterline and stretches the full distance of the County's shoreline. This strip contains an area of approximately 83 square miles and contains nearly all of the subdivisions previously identified as "shoreline subdivisions" (Figure 1.2). Not all of this strip is developable because it contains much of the Chesapeake Bay Resource Protection Area as well as significant areas subject to tidal flooding.

This area is host to most of the planning issues the County will face during the coming decade and beyond. First, it is the area where the most demand for upscale housing has occurred and is likely to occur during the next decade and beyond. Second, there are physical conditions (high water table, poor percolation, shrink-swell soils and shoreline erosion) that present serious constraints to subdivision development. Planning policies must therefore focus on how new development can be accommodated while avoiding serious problem areas and protecting environmentally-sensitive areas.

Recommended Policies within the Shoreline Conservation Area are as follows:

- (a) Development that may be permitted by the County's development regulations shall be planned to preserve the natural beauty, wetlands and other natural resources along the shoreline and adjacent lands.
- (b) New subdivisions shall be planned to minimize shoreline erosion resulting from construction and use of property. Shoreline erosion reduction measures that employ vegetation are preferred over structural features.
- (c) New subdivisions should be planned, whenever feasible, to provide access to the Chesapeake Bay including beaches, boat ramps, fishing points and other water-oriented recreational activities. The establishment of community facilities for the common use of the residents within subdivisions is recommended as a means to reduce the number of individual boat houses and piers.
- (d) The average lot size for new residential subdivisions shall be not less than one (1) acre but no single lot within such subdivisions shall have an area not less than three-

fourths (3/4) of an acre.

- (e) Performance standards of the Chesapeake Bay RPAs continue to apply to all subdivisions developed in the Shoreline Conservation Area.
- (f) New water-oriented enterprises that help develop and support tourism, sports fishing, or other water-related activities are encouraged to be established at sites where they can be accommodated by deep water and appropriate access.

4. Policies for **Villages**

As discussed here, villages are key locations along major highways where commercial, public and residential uses are concentrated. Seven locations were identified for recognition in the Land Use Plan as villages: Callao, Lottsburg, Heathsville, Burgess, Wicomico Church, Reedville and North Kilmarnock.

Each village has a different makeup and arrangement of uses but most of them have features in common. Four are located at major crossroads; Reedville is at the intersection highway and water commerce; and North Kilmarnock is an extension of the Town of Kilmarnock. Villages serve as "commercial hubs", or "town centers" in which both commercial and public services are grouped. Three villages, Callao, Heathsville and Burgess, appear to be more strategically located to play a dominant role for business and institutional service centers. Callao and Burgess are dominant because they are the "gateways" to Northumberland County's commercial corridor (Route 360). Heathsville is important because it is the county seat. Lottsburg and Wicomico Church are located at less dominant intersections and their roles appear to serve a more community-related purpose. North Kilmarnock (that portion of Northumberland County along Route 200 that lies outside the corporate boundary of Kilmarnock) is simply a planned extension of the that town into Northumberland County. This village has the potential for becoming a retail hub because of the large market within Kilmarnock and vicinity.

Reedville has unique characteristics apart from the other village centers. It is located at another type of crossroad, one where a water and land commerce meet. While this is a classic location for a town with a full mix of commercial, industrial and residential development, Reedville has developed primarily as a water-related job center and its supporting residential community. Except for a bank, convenience stores, auto services and bed and breakfast places, Reedville does not have a concentrated business core.

a. Framework of Village Policies

As a first step in identifying policies for villages, it is important to recognize some features that all have in common among which are the following:

- (1) Villages are more intensely-developed areas than the remainder of the County, and each one has the potential of serving as a "town center" for a part of the County. As the focal points of a community, they are the logical places in which to find commercial and governmental services.
- (2) A "commercial hub" marks the primary identity of each village and most of

the commercial and governmental services are found within these hubs. Residential uses are also part of the village structure but they consist mostly of older homes. Most of the new residential development of the County has been established outside the villages.

- (3) The areas immediately beyond the commercial hubs are called "support areas". The support areas extend along the major roads approaching the village and include a mixture of commercial, governmental, service and residential uses.

Beyond the support areas, the land use is a mixture of farms, forests and occasional residential development. The areas surrounding the villages have the potential for development as extensions of the villages.

- (4) A limiting factor to future growth of the more strategically-located villages is the absence of public sewerage systems. Septic tanks offer only limited capacity for development of major commercial development or expansion of existing development.
- (5) Areas designated as "commercial hubs" and "support areas" for villages are intended as a guide to future development within the village areas. While the areas so designated are not intended to be interpreted as zoning districts, the designated areas may be significant factors in evaluating whether changes should be made in the zoning map.

b. Callao:

Callao is a commercial area located at the intersection of U.S. Route 360 and VA Route 202. It is the commercial gateway to Northumberland County from the west. The area contains more than 40 business places showing a mix that is common to the downtown areas of many communities. They include both retail and service businesses. In addition, there is a post office, fire station, rescue squad, a former elementary school building and site, a nearby public park and golf course serving the village. Residential development extends along all four legs of the streets that intersect at Callao. The village is served by a private central water system but no central sewerage system.

The absence a central sewerage system may be the most critical factor to future growth of this commercial area. Existing soil conditions are reportedly inadequate to accommodate septic tank at a scale to support major additions to the commercial area. As a gateway village to Northumberland County, Callao has the potential of becoming a dominant business center for the western part of the County.

Specific goals for the development of Callao are as follows:

- (1) Callao is to be designated as the "western gateway" to Northumberland County.
- (2) The need for a public sewerage system is to be evaluated to serve the central commercial hub.
- (3) Parking arrangement and traffic flow within the commercial hub is to be improved to minimize conflict between through traffic and parked traffic. *Traffic problems within the commercial area are complicated by the use of head-in parking in front of the businesses. While this arrangement represents a convenience for the users of the businesses which should not be overlooked as a desirable feature, the interference between parking and periodic heavy traffic creates an unsafe situation for both moving vehicles and pedestrians.*

As more land is needed for development, there is an abundant supply all around the town center. While it is now used mostly for agricultural purposes, if Callao is served by a public sewerage system at a future date, some of these agricultural lands may be expected to be converted to housing or other urban-type uses.

⁵The language used here is stated as it would appear in an adopted document, although the reader will recognize that this is only a draft document to be reviewed and edited prior to adoption.

PAGE FOR CALLAO LAND USE PLAN

c. Lottsburg

Lottsburg is located about three miles east of Callao on 360. While there is no strong retail core in Lottsburg, this village contains a number of uses that serve both the immediate and larger neighborhoods. The main focus of the village lies between where Route 614 enters from the north and exits to the south. Ace Hardware located on the south leg of Route 614 is a major building supplier. Several other business establishments consisting of a clothing store, convenience store, office and automobile shop are found in Lottsburg. A group of public uses, including a post office, school board office, solid waste facility, VDOT service facility and a church, is also located within the upper development area of the village. In addition, the Holly Graded School is a significant historic site that is listed in the National and State Registers of Historic Places.

The commercial hub in Lottsburg may have only limited potential for growth as a major commercial area. This is likely because of its close proximity to Callao and Heathsville which have stronger commercial strength. Yet the support area around Lottsburg has demonstrated potential for development with selective facilities that serve countywide markets. The School Board office and a major building supplier provide a core employment base that could be expanded by other major employers.

Specific goals for Lottsburg are as follows:

- (1) Promote the village as an employment center with emphasis on businesses and services that serve county-wide markets or serve public services.
- (2) Utilize historic Holly Graded School to promote the village as part of a county-wide historic tour.
- (3) Promote the addition of more service businesses such as those serving the agricultural and building industries of the County.

MAP OF LOTTSBURG LAND USE PLAN

d. Heathsville

Heathsville is the County Seat and primary center of governmental services for Northumberland County. The "commercial hub" contains many businesses and public offices. Businesses range from small shops, food stores, offices, newspaper office, to contractor's office. The Courthouse and Sheriff's office are the predominant public offices located within this hub. Social Services and Health offices, however, are located within the support area in addition to the Northumberland County High School. Recent commercial development within this village includes a Food Lion grocery and a Family Dollar store. A new Northumberland Public Library and a planned new County Administration building. These developments, together with existing commercial development within and near Heathsville, enhance the county seat as a potential commercial growth site.

Heathsville has many older buildings of historical significance including the Rice's Hotel and Hewlett Tavern that is undergoing (in 1995-1996) restoration and renovation. Other historic landmarks that are on the historic registers include St. Stephen's Church and Springfield (Figure 1.8). An historic district has been established and approved for the federal register for the Heathsville area.

A private water system serves Heathsville but there is no central sewer to serve the area. Although soils are reasonably satisfactory for septic tanks, the development of the village into a larger commercial complex is limited until a public sewerage system is established.

Specific goals for Heathsville are as follows:

- (1) Designate Heathsville as a major village center.
- (2) The need for a public sewerage system is to be evaluated to serve the central commercial hub.
- (3) Utilize historic Rice's Hotel and Hewlett Tavern to promote Heathsville as part of a county-wide historic tour.
- (4) Provide for residential growth within the proximity of the village beyond the commercial hub and support area (keyed to the availability of public sewer).

MAP OF HEATHSVILLE LAND USE PLAN

e. Burgess

Burgess is to the east of Northumberland County what Callao is to the west - the first major "gateway" to the County. It is a commercial village located at the intersection of U.S. Route 360 and VA Route 200. The area contains more than 25 business places which include both retail and service businesses. The mix of uses is varied as might be found in downtown of any small town. The variety of businesses in 1995 include:

dry cleaning	medical office	marine sales/service
banks	office park	restaurants
hardware store	cabinet shop	auto repair/gas
convenience store	medical supply	accounting service
thrift store	air conditioning shop	medical offices

There is also a post office, the former Fairfield Elementary School building and site and several churches within the village area.

Burgess is more spread out than the other villages. Its core "commercial hub" is located at the intersection of U.S. 360 and VA 200 and includes the intensive commercial development near that intersection. But strip development along Route 200 is quite extensive and for that reason has been added to the support area of this village.

The absence of public sewer does not appear to be a limiting factor on the growth of this area. That is perhaps owed to the existence of better soils in this area plus the fact that development extends along both sides of more than a mile of primary highway frontage in addition to its 360 frontage. If public sewers were available perhaps a more focused commercial development near the 360/200 intersection may have been possible.

Specific goals for Burgess are as follows:

- (1) Designate Burgess as the eastern "Gateway Village" to Northumberland County.
- (2) Promote a more focused commercial complex near the intersection of the two primary roads.
- (3) Improve the visibility of the intersection to better identify Route 200 as it is approached from Route 360 (both directions).
- (4) The need for a public sewerage system is to be evaluated to serve the central commercial hub.
- (5) Provide for residential growth within the proximity of the village beyond the commercial hub and support area (keyed to the availability of public sewer).

MAP OF BURGESS LAND USE PLAN

f. Wicomico Church

Wicomico Church is located about five miles south of Burgess on VA Route 200. Located about halfway between Kilmarnock and Burgess, the main focus of the village is on community service to the area lying south of the Great Wicomico River.

Existing commercial development (1995) included two convenience stores, several small retail stores, newspaper office, electric and plumbing shop, hair style shops, Kuboto Tractor dealer, machine shop and marine repair service. Public uses include three churches.

Because of its location between two strong commercial areas (Kilmarnock and Burgess), Wicomico Church has not developed as a strong business center. Except for the tractor dealer and newspaper office, the village serves mostly a neighborhood function. But the existence of several established churches makes the village a popular place of assembly for the community activities.

Specific goals for Wicomico Church are as follows:

- (1) Promote the village as the primary supply and service center for the area south of the Great Wicomico River. The potential for additional growth is linked to the rate of development on several of the creeks extending into the County's shoreline from the Chesapeake Bay and the Great Wicomico River.
- (2) With the cooperation of the churches that are located within the village, Wicomico Church can function as a "community center" for the southern portion of the County.
- (3) Add other public community services as they can be provided (i.e., branch library or bookmobile, fire/rescue facilities, etc.)

⁶At this writing, PMA does not have information of community services which may already be provided to this community.

Map of Wicomico Church Plan

g. Reedville

It has been mentioned that Reedville is a different kind of community than the other five villages. This is an old village which was built around water-related and fishing industries or operations. The land use is mostly residential but many private homes have been converted to bed and breakfast places which are very popular during the summer months.

The main peninsula that first established Reedville is designated as a Historic Area and is registered on the National Register of Historic Places. The historic district starts at Crowder Street and runs to the water containing lots on both sides of Route 644.

The area covered by the Reedville future land use plan contains all lots between Routes 360/657 and the branches of Cockrell Creek that border on each side of Reedville. The tax map of this area shows 248 lots. The area covered by these lots is of 218 acres. The average density is 1.14 lots per acre. The highest density found in any one block was four lots per acre.

Specific goals for Reedville are as follows:

- (1) Identify an area at the entrance to Reedville (intersection of Routes 360 and 657) as a commercial area. The area shown includes commercial uses presently in place at this location and includes a slightly larger area for additional businesses.
- (2) Identify another commercial area at the tip of the Reedville Peninsula. This area also reflects existing commercial and industrial patterns. The term commercial as used here is broad enough to include banks as well as marine railways.
- (3) Within the Historic District establish guidelines for retaining the original "town character" in buildings as they are modified, constructed or reconstructed.
- (4) Within the areas designated as residential, include the establishment of "bed

⁷A small area of Reedville located within the area formed by Route 657, South Avenue, Morrison Avenue and Route 644 contains smaller lots (69 lots on 117.25 acres, an average of 4 lots per acre). This calculation was done as a test of one of CBLAD's criteria for Intensively Developed Areas, or IDAs. The criterion requires a density greater than four dwelling units per acre. This test demonstrates that in the worst case situation, there is no area in Northumberland County that has a density greater than four dwelling units per acre; therefore, it is concluded that Northumberland County has no Intensively Developed Areas as defined by CBLAD criteria.

and breakfast" inns within the definition of "residential."

MAP OF REEDVILLE PLAN

h. North Kilmarnock

This is a potential future village within the vision of the Comprehensive Plan. Because of its proximity of a substantial market area, both resident and tourist, the potential exists for the establishment of a major village in this area. Subject to availability and agreement of the Town, the area has perhaps the most early potential to be served by public sewer which is very important, almost essential, to the development of a substantial business complex.

In addition to its commercial potential, the North Kilmarnock Village also could be developed as a planned residential community. It offers perhaps the best opportunity in the County for the development of an modern planned unit development mixed with residential, recreational and commercial facilities.

Specific goals for the North Kilmarnock Area are as follows:

- (1) Development within the area is to be guided by an comprehensive land development plan and economic plan consistent with present day trends for planned communities.
- (2) Such development should be undertaken in coordination with the Town of Kilmarnock.
- (3) The primary focus of development should be in two areas: (i) to establish a substantial job base within the County within the framework of the goals and policies of the Comprehensive Plan and (ii) to expand residential opportunities for both existing and new residents.
- (4) The concept of such a planned community is not limited to a single site development; a comprehensive approach might consider various groupings of uses such as focusing the more intensive uses along the major highway while locating residential components in more remote rural or waterfront areas.

C. HOW TO USE THE LAND USE PLAN

Although the Land Use Plan is only one component of the Comprehensive Plan, it is very important because of its long-range influence on the use and development of both privately and publicly-owned land. Its impact is greatest on privately-owned land because almost all of the County's area is in that category. The land use plan is also an important document with respect to the environment, particularly when read in context with the Water Quality Protection Plan which is the subject of Chapter 5. Functions of the Land Use Plan and general guidelines for its use are summarized in the following comments.

1. The first reason for the Land Use Plan's importance is that it establishes official long-range policies for the use and development of land for the entire County. According to Virginia statutes (Va. Code Section 15.1-466) which authorizes counties to do planning,

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the comprehensive plan focuses on the physical development of the territory and it is for the purpose of:

"...guiding and accomplishing a coordinated, adjusted and harmonious development of the [County] which will, in accordance with present and probable future needs and resources best promote the health, safety, morals, order, convenience, prosperity and general welfare of [its] inhabitants"

Among the specific components of the comprehensive plan authorized under this section is the following specific authority for a land use plan:

"The designation of areas for various types of public and private development and use, such as different kinds of residential, business, industrial, agricultural, conservation, recreation, public service, floodplain and drainage, and other areas."

The Code requires that each community have a comprehensive plan, that it be reviewed every five years and updated as found necessary.

2. The Land Use Plan serves as a framework for establishing land use regulations which are the local laws that govern the use and development of land. The Land Use Plan and associated policies provide guidelines for preparing or updating Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances. The Zoning Ordinance establishes how land may legally be used and the Subdivision Ordinance establishes requirements for subdividing land into lots and recording them in appropriate places. Both the land use plan and land use regulations should be reviewed together periodically and updated as appropriate.
3. The Land Use Plan is used in making decisions on requests by property owners for a change in use of their properties. In many cases, a change in use requires a policy change (rezoning) by the governing body. The Land Use Plan should be one of the standard sources used during a rezoning process.
4. After the Land Use Plan has been adopted by the Board of Supervisors it gains a legal status according to Section 15.1-456 of the Code. This Section provides that after the Board adopts a comprehensive plan, or part thereof, unless a feature is shown on the adopted plan, it must be reviewed by the Planning Commission. The Commission then determines whether that feature is substantially in accord with the adopted plan.
5. As a final item, the Land Use Plan should be interpreted to include a Water Quality Protection Plan (see Chapter 5) which is designed to address issues of the Chesapeake Bay preservation. This element of the plan is required by the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act as established in the Regulations of the Chesapeake Bay Local Assistance Board.