



James City County  
Residential Development in Rural Lands Study  
**STEERING COMMITTEE AGENDA**

wednesday november 30, 2005 | 4 pm

- 4:00        **OPENING** - Jeff Barra & Public Comments
- 4:10        **REVIEW PUBLIC WORKSHOP FEEDBACK**
- Notes from Workshop - Steering Committee affirmation
- What we learned - Consultant's summary
- 4:20        **PUBLIC WORKSHOP** - Steering Committee Comments
- Individual observations - 2-3 minute highlights from each member
- 5:00        **ISSUES FOR PUBLIC WORKSHOP #2 (January 14)**
- Expanding Options beyond clusters
- Steering Committee Discussion & Evaluation of Options
- 5:30        **COMMITTEE HOMEWORK**
- Feedback due to Tammy Rosario by Wednesday, Dec. 7
- Objectives for next Steering Committee Meeting (Wednesday, Dec. 14)
- 5:35        **CLOSING** - Public Comments
- 5:45        **ADJOURN**



# James City County Residential Development in Rural Lands Study

## PUBLIC WORKSHOP FEEDBACK

WHAT WE LEARNED	
DON'T:	DO:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Devalue our property values/ investments</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Further restrict our land</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Contribute to sprawl in the County</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Use clustering to speed up the pace of development in the County</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Increase the tax burden on rural landowners</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Make traffic problems worse in the County</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Force people to live in a cluster as their only option</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Make it less affordable to live in the rural area</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Restrict the ability to divide off lots for family members</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Restrict farming and traditional rural land uses</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Protect our property values</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Expand, not restrict, landowner rights</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Manage environmental impacts from development</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Create incentives or expand development options for rural landowners</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Reward low density development</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Increase opportunities for affordable housing</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Offer a range of options – not just one option in the rural lands</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Protect/encourage farming and forestry uses in the rural area</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Encourage overall rural economic development – not just residential development</li> </ul>



## James City County Residential Development in Rural Lands Study

# RURAL LAND POLICY OPTIONS

### DRAFT LIST

**Note:** The following list of strategic options for development policy in the Rural Lands was developed based on the range of comments heard in the public workshop. It is intended as a starting point for the Steering Committee's discussion. It is not an exhaustive list – rather, it highlights some basic policy options with the understanding that many of them could be combined or varied in a number of ways. As you review the list, some important discussion questions are:

1. What other options would you add to the list?
2. Which options would you want to eliminate as unfeasible or undesirable at this time?
3. How would you rank the options in order of desirability to pursue further with the Steering Committee?
4. Are there other Pros or Cons that should be added to the lists?



# James City County Residential Development in Rural Lands Study

## 1. NO CHANGE

### **Strategy:**

Don't change any zoning, subdivision or land development standards in the existing A-1 and R-8 zones

PROS:	CONS:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Preserves existing property values and current landowner perceptions of land values</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Maintains current expectations for use of rural lots</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Doesn't affect tax rates or fiscal impacts in the near term</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Allows spacious lots in rural subdivisions – doesn't force living close to neighbors</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Relatively easy to develop 'by right' subdivisions if they are small (less than 5 lots)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Doesn't preserve significant open space</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> May lead to rural sprawl (dispersed large lot development) if extended over all rurally zoned areas</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Doesn't preserve traditional farming or forestry uses</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> By right development may not 'pay its way' in terms of the cost of public services</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> No opportunity for proffers to offset development impacts with by right development</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Market for 3-acre lots could become glutted – typically seen as 'too small to plow and too big to mow'</li></ul>



# James City County Residential Development in Rural Lands Study

## 1. NO CHANGE

**Strategy:**

Don't change any zoning, subdivision or land development standards in the existing A-1 and R-8 zones

PROS:	CONS:



# James City County Residential Development in Rural Lands Study

## 2. REWARD LOW DENSITY DEVELOPMENT

### Strategy:

Provide incentives or “rewards” for residential development that is lower than the ‘by-right’ density of 1 unit per 3 acres in rural areas

### Examples:

- Allow a greater number of lots to be developed with on-site wells (e.g. up to 12 lots with on-site wells) for developments of lower density (1 unit per 6 acres or lower).
- Allow a ‘sliding scale’ with a greater number of on-site wells permitted as the density is lowered
- Make the review process simpler for lower density development such as considering development below a certain density to be a ‘minor’ subdivision
- Allow private roads and/or less extensive road standards for lower density development

PROS:	CONS:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Doesn’t change any existing ‘by right’ development rights for rural landowners</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Could provide a net environmental and traffic benefit over current 3-acre development if rural areas build out at lower densities in the long term</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Allows greater landowner flexibility to divide land in larger parcels without building expensive infrastructure improvements</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> May allow more rural open space if landowners exercise this option over time</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> More conducive to smaller ‘farmette’ lots although it probably doesn’t help preserve larger scale farming or forestry uses</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Larger lots on lower density developments may be less affordable than current 3-acre lots</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> May ‘use up’ the vacant land faster if it speeds up the pace of residential development in the rural area</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Will not preserve significant areas of rural open space unless development density is much lower than 1 in 3 acres (e.g. 1 in 10 acres or below)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> May not be enough of an incentive to be worth it to landowners if market for rural lots continues to be strong</li> </ul>



# James City County Residential Development in Rural Lands Study

## 2. REWARD LOW DENSITY DEVELOPMENT

**Strategy:**

Provide incentives or “rewards” for residential development that is lower than the ‘by-right’ density of 1 unit per 3 acres in rural areas

PROS:	CONS:



# James City County Residential Development in Rural Lands Study

## 3. DISCOURAGE CONVENTIONAL 3 ACRE DEVELOPMENT

**Strategy:**

Provide additional standards for (but don't prohibit) conventional 'by-right' development at a density of 1 unit per 3 acres in rural areas. The additional standards may need to be supported by a detailed study and would be required in order to mitigate the long-term environmental impacts of this density of development over the rural areas of the county.

**Examples:**

- Reduce the number of lots that can be developed with on-site wells (e.g. no more than 3 lots with on-site wells) in the A-1 and R-8 zones
- Preclude waivers from the standards for development with communal wells
- Require additional submittal requirements for conventional 3-acre development in order to mitigate potential environmental impacts – for example require an environmental impact study or a groundwater report to be submitted for major subdivisions
- Require wider lot frontages for conventional 3-acre lots in order to preserve the open character of rural road frontages and provide a safer distribution of driveway curb cuts

PROS:	CONS:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Doesn't change the density allowed in the R-8 and A-1 zone</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> If used in concert with strategy 2. (above) – it could provide a net environmental and traffic if rural areas build out at lower densities in the long term</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Could provide long-term environmental benefits if development standards are tightened to be more environmentally sensitive</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> May encourage farming and forestry uses by reducing the pace of 'conversion' to residential subdivision development</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Could be designed to exempt traditional small subdivisions and family subdivisions that are important to farmer's economic well-being</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Increases the financial and technical burden for those developing and subdividing land in rural areas</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Will require additional administrative review time and expertise for the County</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Will not preserve significant areas of rural open space unless development density is much lower than 1 in 3 acres (e.g. 1 in 10 acres or below)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> May not alter current development trends if market for rural lots continues to be strong</li> </ul>



# James City County Residential Development in Rural Lands Study

## 3. DISCOURAGE CONVENTIONAL 3 ACRE DEVELOPMENT

**Strategy:**

Provide additional standards for (but don't prohibit) conventional 'by-right' development at a density of 1 unit per 3 acres in rural areas. The additional standards may need to be supported by a detailed study and would be required in order to mitigate the long-term environmental impacts of this density of development over the rural areas of the county.

PROS:	CONS:



# James City County Residential Development in Rural Lands Study

## 4. REZONE RURAL AREAS TO LOWER DENSITY

**Strategy:**

Comprehensively rezone the A-1 and R-8 zones with new lower density standards that encourage farming, forestry and open space preservation.

**Examples:**

- Lower density to a rate that is more consistent with agricultural preservation, such as 1 unit per 10 or 20 acres.
- Develop a sliding scale zoning district that provides lower average densities but allows higher densities on smaller parcels that are less conducive to farming
- Lower ‘by right’ density in the rural areas, but provide density bonuses for clustered and environmentally sensitive development

PROS:	CONS:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Preserves significant areas of open space on private lots</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Preserves more opportunities for farming and the farm economy by reducing ‘conversion’ of farms to primarily residential subdivisions</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Reduces impacts on roads and County services such as schools and emergency services</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> May provide for lower landowner taxes over time if cost of service to rural areas is reduced</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> More conducive to smaller ‘farmette’ lots although it probably doesn’t help preserve larger scale farming or forestry uses</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Changes the existing ‘by-right’ expectations of rural landowners</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> May reduce the economic return of development on rural land if the reduced development potential is not offset by higher value of larger lots</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Larger lots on lower density developments may be less affordable than current 3-acre lots</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> May not preserve vibrant rural economy if not combined with other economic development programs that support farming or other compatible uses</li> </ul>



# James City County Residential Development in Rural Lands Study

## 4. REZONE RURAL AREAS TO LOWER DENSITY

**Strategy:**

Comprehensively rezone the A-1 and R-8 zones with new lower density standards that encourage farming, forestry and open space preservation.

PROS:	CONS:



# James City County Residential Development in Rural Lands Study

## 5. PROVIDE A VOLUNTARY CLUSTER OPTION IN RURAL AREAS

### Strategy:

Allow a cluster development provision as an option in the A-1 and R-8 zones or in the Subdivision Ordinance. The option would be voluntary and would not change the underlying density of the zone.

### Examples:

- Allow a reduction in lot size to one-acre lots under the cluster option, provided that 60% or more of the site is preserved as open space
- Open space preservation could be achieved by dedicating it to a homeowners association or a public entity, or by maintaining private ownership and putting an easement on the unbuilt portion of the lots.
- Provide additional (non-density) incentives for the cluster option – such as those used in Strategy 2, above.

<b>PROS:</b>	<b>CONS:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> May preserve significant areas of open space if employed</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> May preserve some large lots in farming, although they would be adjacent to a 'cluster' subdivision</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Provides landowners with more flexibility and options rather than restricting their current rights</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> May allow wider range of lot prices (potentially more affordable ones) based on variety of lot sizes</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Provides more flexibility in site design to avoid development on sensitive areas of the site</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> May require additional level of review and approval to exercise the cluster development option</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> May not be enough of an incentive to be worth it to landowners if market for 3-acre lots continues to be strong</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> May not alter current development trends if market for rural lots continues to be strong</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> May preserve open space without preserving essential rural economy and character of the area</li> </ul>



# James City County Residential Development in Rural Lands Study

## 5. PROVIDE A VOLUNTARY CLUSTER OPTION IN RURAL AREAS

**Strategy:**

Allow a cluster development provision as an option in the A-1 and R-8 zones or in the Subdivision Ordinance. The option would be voluntary and would not change the underlying density of the zone.

PROS:	CONS:



# James City County Residential Development in Rural Lands Study

## 6. REZONE RURAL AREAS TO REQUIRE MANDATORY CLUSTERING

### Strategy:

Set a maximum lot size that is significantly below the density allowance of the rural areas, so that there is a 'de facto' clustering for all rural development.

### Examples:

- Set a maximum one-acre lot size in the A-3 and R-8 zones, while still keeping the density at 1 unit per 3 acres. The remainder land would have to be protected as open space.
- Open space preservation could be achieved by dedicating it to a homeowners association or a public entity, or by maintaining private ownership and putting an easement on the unbuilt portion of the lots.

Lots wouldn't necessarily have to be contiguous – could be separated by open space to avoid the 'crowding' that is characteristic of some cluster development.

<b>PROS:</b>	<b>CONS:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Preserves significant areas of open space on private lots or in common ownership</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> May preserve some large lots in farming, although they would be adjacent to a 'cluster' subdivision</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Doesn't change underlying density of the rural zones (not technically a 'downzoning')</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> May allow more affordable housing options in rural areas</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Provides more flexibility in site design to avoid development on sensitive areas of the site</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Changes landowner expectation to develop 3-acre lots, but doesn't change density</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> May result in a glut of 1-acre lots on the market if no other options are available</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> May affect groundwater withdrawals without detailed standards for lot placement on the site</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> May result in all the lots being placed along the existing road frontages unless standards dictate where lots may go on the site</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> May preserve open space without preserving essential rural economy and character of the area</li> </ul>



# James City County Residential Development in Rural Lands Study

## 6. REZONE RURAL AREAS TO REQUIRE MANDATORY CLUSTERING

**Strategy:**

Set a maximum lot size that is significantly below the density allowance of the rural areas, so that there is a 'de facto' clustering for all rural development.

PROS:	CONS: