

## RURAL DEVELOPMENT

### Rural Development Guidelines - Residential

1. Subdivide residential lots on soils that possess the best drainage and water table characteristics using a reasonable mixture of acceptable rural residential lot sizes provided it is determined by the City that the principal goal of protecting agriculture and conserving our natural resources is not compromised through this subdivision method.
2. Illustrate the ultimate plan of development, as well as anticipated development phases, if any.
3. Maximize the opportunity for agricultural, equestrian and similar compatible rural activities as part of the residential development. Avoid fragmenting or dividing remaining farmland and open space into small lots.
4. Locate protective buffers between proposed residential structures and abutting agricultural operations. These buffers should be at least 50 feet in width. The first 25 feet of such area adjacent to an on-going agricultural operation should be heavily planted with a mixture of grasses and low growing indigenous shrubs; and the second twenty-five feet of such area adjacent to the structure should be planted with a double row of trees with a minimum caliper of one and one half (1 ½) inches and should be centered no more than thirty feet apart. Such trees should be indigenous and consist of a mixture of 25% deciduous and 75% evergreen to screen as necessary or to provide scenic vistas. Seasonal changes and foliage color should be thought of when selecting planting materials.
5. Whenever possible, plan developments to preserve existing trees and other significant natural resources. In those cases where development is proposed within areas of existing tree cover, design the placement of buildings and driveways so as to save and protect as many trees and other significant environmental features as possible.



*Typical rural residential*

6. Include substantial setbacks, with landscaping, between dwellings and rural arterial roadways as discussed in Section 402 of the City Zoning Ordinance.

7. Provide flag lots, where warranted to advance the purpose of this plan, taking into consideration the size of the lots within the subdivision, existing or future tree cover and other pertinent characteristics relating to the need for rural residential privacy and open space. Design appropriate widths and pavement types for driveways serving flag lots. (e.g. fire truck access).



*Horse pasture between road and home*

8. If necessary, provide longer distances for rural cul-de-sac streets than is otherwise permitted throughout the City. Locate roadway drainage ditches a sufficient distance from the edge of pavement to enable emergency vehicles to pass around road obstructions.

9. Minimize all access points along rural arterial roadways, for example, through consolidation of properties.

10. Provide greater streetlight separation distances than is otherwise permitted throughout the City. Focus the light downward, not upward to the sky.

11. Protect land for open space purposes through the use of a variety of legal instruments, such as deed restrictions, appropriate zoning classifications, protective easements or transfer to a stewardship agency (eg. foundations or conservation groups), or through some other appropriate means.

12. Establish visible landmarks that are incorporated into the design of development entrances that recall the rural heritage of area.

13. Provide trail systems for recreation.

## Rural Development Guidelines - Non-Residential

1. Protect rural character and existing scenic views.
2. The identity of Virginia Beach's rural community should take its cue from its rural heritage. The areas known as Creeds and Blackwater have some buildings that encourage a type of design reminiscent to the area.



*Blackwater Trading Post*

3. Franchise retail, office parks or shopping centers are not encouraged.
4. Development in rural commercial centers can include locally oriented retail, service and community uses scaled to be compatible with the character of the rural landscape.

5. Non-residential development should be located within the defined Rural Community Areas to encourage interaction of people, not vehicles.
6. Non-residential, locally oriented retail or services are limited in the rural area so as not to require the extension of urban services.



*Locally oriented retail*

7. Proposals for non-residential development in this area should be designed to complement the surrounding rural character in terms of size, scale, architecture and selection of materials. They should also adhere to sound environmental principles that include energy-efficient design and effective groundwater protection.