



ENVISION HANOVER
OVERVIEW OF PROPOSED LAND USE DESIGNATIONS
January 2023

Background

The existing Comprehensive Plan is “**use based**,” with the document providing guidance on uses and their location. Based upon public feedback, a goal of the updated plan is to be more “**design based**.” Not only will the proposed land use descriptions provide guidance on different use types and their location, but also include guidance regarding:

- Transitions between Uses (Landscaping/Buffers, Uses, Building Size)
- Buffering along Major Thoroughfares
- Pedestrian/Bicycle Infrastructure
- Access and Circulation
- Building Design
- Signage

This additional guidance will provide landowners, developers, and decisionmakers with more information regarding public expectations for the layout, design, and functionality of new development, while allowing flexibility to accommodate innovative design and site-specific conditions.

The project team has prepared **draft** descriptions for each land use designation shown on the General Land Use Plan. These initial revisions have been prepared based upon:

- Feedback from the Visual Preference Survey;
- Feedback from the Land Use Visioning Workshop;
- Feedback received from the Community Participation Team (CPT), Planning Commission, and Board of Supervisors;
- Lessons learned from previously-reviewed zoning cases; and
- Best practices from peer communities.

Proposed Land Use Designations

Some of the existing land use designations would be renamed, and others would be divided to better reflect different contexts.

Existing Designation/Name	Proposed Designation/Name
Agricultural	Rural/Agricultural
Rural Village	Rural Village
—	Suburban Transitional Residential*
Suburban General	Suburban Neighborhood Residential
Suburban High	Suburban High Residential
Multi-Family	Multi-Family Residential
Multi-Use	Multi-Use
Commercial	Highway Commercial*
	Neighborhood Commercial*
	Rural Crossroads*
Business-Industrial	Business Flexible
Planned Business	Employment Center
Destination Commerce	Destination Commerce
Limited Industrial	Limited Industrial
Industrial	Industrial
Flood Plain	Natural Conservation
—	Suburban Federal Battlefield Lands

*New Designations

The description for each designation will include/address:

- General Description of Designation (including general location)
- List of Appropriate Uses
- Project Framework (Residential Densities, Mix of Uses, Open Space)
- Community Character (Landscaping, Building Design, Signage, Parking)
- Transitions between Uses (Design Treatments to Minimize Negative Impacts between Use Types)
- Transportation (Access, Circulation, Pedestrian/Bicycle Infrastructure)

The final layout will include images and conceptual layouts that help demonstrate these recommended design principles.

Summary of Land Use Concepts

Rural Designations

There are three proposed designations applied to rural areas:

- *Rural/Agricultural* (currently *Agricultural*)
- *Rural Village* (currently *Rural Village*)
- *Rural Crossroads* (currently *Commercial* in rural areas)

Rural/Agricultural

Within the ***Rural/Agricultural*** land use designation (called *Agricultural* in the current plan), the following concepts are proposed:

- Maintain the current recommendations regarding residential densities (up to 1 unit per 6.25 acres).
- Cluster subdivisions should provide at least 70% open space. Open space is encouraged to be located to protect rural views from adjacent roadways, natural resources, historic sites, and prime agricultural soils.
- Recommend that buffers at least 100 feet wide be provided along major thoroughfares adjacent to residential development to preserve viewsheds from rural roadways.
- Provide guidance regarding the siting and design of agribusiness and agritourism operations to minimize negative impacts to the surrounding community. Guidance addresses setbacks from existing residential uses, potential noise impacts, and the design of buildings, exterior lighting, and signage.

Rural Village

Within the ***Rural Village*** land use designation (which is currently applied to Beaverdam, Montpelier, and Hanover Courthouse), the following concepts are proposed:

- Allow limited single-family residential development with a maximum density of one unit per acre (with adequate public or private utilities). Residential subdivisions are limited to 25 acres and must access the main thoroughfare within the village.
- Provide more guidance regarding the design and character of new development within *Rural Villages*, including recommendations regarding landscaping, building materials, building size, parking design, signage, and the provision of pedestrian pathways and sidewalks.
- Recommend that buildings have a maximum footprint of 15,000 square feet and a maximum height of two stories (unless design techniques are used to make the larger buildings appear like multiple smaller buildings).

Rural Crossroads

Within the **Rural Crossroads** land use designation (which would include small areas designated **Commercial** located outside of the SSA), the following concepts are proposed:

- Allow limited, small-scale businesses at key intersections to serve nearby rural areas, including areas where there are (or have been) historic country stores or similar commercial uses.
- Recommend that buildings have a maximum footprint of 10,000 square feet and a maximum height of two stories (unless design techniques are used to make larger buildings appear like multiple smaller buildings).

Rural Development: Visualizing Key Concepts	
<p>Existing vegetation is maintained along a rural roadway to screen low-density residential development from view.</p>	
<p>New commercial buildings within rural villages should incorporate architectural elements and materials commonly found on nearby historic structures and have footprints less than 15,000 square feet.</p>	

Retail business in historic country store at a rural crossroads.



Smaller-scale gas station at rural crossroads with traditional architecture and small-scale monument signage that coordinates with the building.



Agri-tourism uses should be sited and designed to minimize negative impacts on the surrounding community (noise, lighting, odors, etc.) with buildings signed at an appropriate scale to blend in with surrounding rural areas.



Residential Designations

There are four proposed residential designations applied within the SSA:

- *Suburban Transitional Residential* (**New Designation**): Up to 1.5 units/acre (gross)
- *Suburban Neighborhood Residential* (currently *Suburban General*): 1.5 – 3 units/acre (gross)
- *Suburban High Residential* (currently *Suburban High*): 3 – 7 units/acre (gross)
- *Multi-Family Residential* (currently *Multi-Family*): 8 – 15 units/acre (gross)

Within all of the residential designations, there is design-based guidance that addresses the following issues:

- **Buffers along Major Thoroughfares:** Recommends that buffers be provided along major thoroughfares to preserve viewsheds from roadways and reduce impacts of traffic noise and lights on adjacent houses. For most of these designations, it is recommended that buffers be at least 100 feet wide (50 feet wide for multi-family residential).
- **Building Materials:** Recommends that high-quality building materials be used.
- **Building Design:** Recommends that varied (but complementary) architecture be used within a development.
- **Garage Placement/Visibility:** Recommends that garages be designed and situated so that they are not a prominent part of the streetscape.
- **Transitions between Uses:** Recommends that buffers and other design techniques be used to transition to adjacent uses (with different recommendations depending on whether the adjacent use is higher or lower intensity).
- **Pedestrian/Bicycle Infrastructure:** Provides recommendations regarding the provision of pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure. Sidewalks are recommended on both sides of residential streets (except within *Suburban Transitional Residential*, where sidewalks are acceptable on one side of the street).

Many of these recommendations align with feedback received through the Visual Preference Survey.

Suburban Transitional Residential

Suburban Transitional Residential is a new land use designation that would generally be applied to the edges of the Suburban Service Area (SSA) where there is limited existing development. This land use designation would:

- Recommend single-family residential development at densities of up to 1.5 units/acre (gross) with a minimum lot size of 20,000 square feet and minimum lot width of 125 feet.
- Recommend that at least 20% of the project area be reserved as open space (as opposed to 15% in *Neighborhood Residential*).

Suburban Neighborhood Residential

Within the ***Suburban Neighborhood Residential*** land use designation (called ***Suburban General*** in the current plan), the following concepts are proposed:

- Maintain the current residential density recommendations of 1.5 – 3 units/acre (gross).
- Recommend that at least 15% of the project area be reserved as open space.
- Recommend that no more than 30% of units be attached within projects that have a mix of housing types.

Suburban High Residential

Within the ***Suburban High Residential*** land use designation (called ***Suburban High*** in the current plan), the following concepts are proposed:

- Maintain the current residential density recommendations of 3 – 7 units/acre (gross).
- Recommend that at least 25% of the project area be reserved as open space.
- Limit multi-family buildings to no more than six units in a building and townhouses to no more than six attached units in a row (no more than four attached units in a row abutting existing single-family residential development).

Multi-Family Residential

Within the ***Multi-Family Residential*** land use designation (called ***Multi-Family*** in the current plan), the following concepts are proposed:

- Maintain the current residential density recommendations of 8 – 15 units/acre (gross).
- Recommend that at least 25% of the project area be reserved as open space.
- Allow mixed-use development (with neighborhood-oriented commercial).
- Recommend that shorter and smaller buildings be located on the perimeter of projects adjacent to existing single-family residential development.

Residential Development: Visualizing Key Concepts	
<p>Single-family homes with rear-loading garages and varied architecture. Streets are lined with sidewalks and street trees.</p>	

Single-family homes with garages set back from the front façade facing a park area.



In transitional areas, single-family homes are located on wider lots with side-loading garages preferred.



Smaller-scale multifamily residential buildings.



Neighborhoods incorporate a mix of active and passive recreational amenities, with recreational areas dispersed throughout.



Neighborhoods incorporate a mix of active and passive recreational amenities, with recreational areas dispersed throughout the neighborhood. Community gardens and other features can be used to incorporate the County's rural character into new development.



Sidewalks and street trees are provided within new development.



Shared-use baths and other pedestrian/bicycle facilities can be incorporated into a neighborhood's open space.



A combination of tree, shrubs, and berms shield new residential development from view. Pedestrian pathways are provided along major thoroughfares.



Commercial Designations

There are three proposed commercial designations applied within the SSA:

- *Neighborhood Commercial* (currently small nodes designated *Commercial* within SSA)
- *Highway Commercial* (currently areas along arterial roadways designated *Commercial*)
- *Destination Commerce*

Within all of the commercial designations, there is design-based guidance that addresses the following issues:

- **Landscaping/Buffers along Major Thoroughfares:** Recommends that enhanced landscaping and/or buffers be provided along major thoroughfares to soften the appearance of commercial development and create attractive gateways to the community.
- **Building Design:** Recommends that buildings use high-quality materials, façade articulation, and varied rooflines on street-facing facades to create attractive streetscapes, with coordinated architecture throughout commercial projects to create a unified development.
- **Signage:** Indicates that monument signage is preferred.
- **Transitions between Uses:** Recommends that landscaped buffers be provided adjacent to residential development (with recommended widths varying depending upon intensity of uses), that building height be limited adjacent to residential development, and that loading areas not be oriented towards residential uses.
- **Interconnected Street Network:** Recommends that an interconnected street network be provided to minimize access to major thoroughfares, along with shared driveways.
- **Pedestrian/Bicycle Infrastructure:** Recommends that sidewalks be provided within the development and to adjacent uses, as well as along adjacent major thoroughfares.

Neighborhood Commercial

Within the *Neighborhood Commercial* land use designation (which would include small nodes designated *Commercial* in the current plan), the following concepts are proposed:

- Allow small-scale commercial uses at designated intersections that serve surrounding neighborhoods.
- Recommend that buildings have a maximum footprint of 12,500 square feet and a maximum height of two stories (unless design techniques are used to make larger buildings appear like multiple smaller buildings).

Highway Commercial

Within the *Highway Commercial* land use designation (which would include areas designated *Commercial* along arterial roadways), the following concept is proposed:

- Allow a mix of commercial uses (including large-scale commercial uses) along arterial roadways and/or near interstate interchanges.

- Allow mixed-use development (with at least 50% of the project area dedicated to commercial uses).

Destination Commerce

Within the ***Destination Commerce*** land use designation, the following concept is proposed:

- Emphasize that these areas are intended to accommodate major destinations/attractions that draw from a regional and/or statewide market, and that nearby complementary uses should complement the main destination in the area.

Commercial Development: Visualizing Key Concepts	
<p>Building incorporates high-quality materials, such as fiber-cement siding, stone, and metal roofing. Varied rooflines (including pitched roofs and dormers) add visual interest.</p>	
<p>Existing vegetation is preserved within a buffer area along the existing road, softening the appearance of the building. Parking areas are located to the side and the rear of the building.</p>	

Wide sidewalks and pedestrian pathways are located along major thoroughfares and within the development. Street trees provide shade to pedestrians.



Commercial buildings with high-quality materials, varied rooflines, and different architectural features that add visual interest. Landscaping and decorative fencing along the major thoroughfare softens the appearance of the development. Monument signs are used. A shared-use path provides pedestrian access. Limited direct access to major thoroughfares.



Monument signs with landscaping help create attractive commercial corridors.



Industrial/Employment-Focused Designations

There are four industrial and employment-focused land use designations applied within the SSA:

- *Limited Industrial* (currently *Limited Industrial*)
- *Industrial* (currently *Industrial*)
- *Business Flexible* (currently *Business-Industrial*)
- *Employment Center* (currently *Planned Business*)

Within the industrial and employment-focused designations, there is design-based guidance that addresses the following issues:

- **Buffers along Major Thoroughfares:** Recommends that enhanced landscaping and/or buffers be provided along major thoroughfares to soften the appearance of industrial development. Recommended buffer widths are 100 feet for *Industrial* and *Light Industrial* and 75 feet for *Employment Center*, with narrower widths acceptable in *Business Flexible* (since that designation focuses primarily on already-developed areas).
- **Orientation of Loading Facilities:** Recommends that bay doors, garages, and loading/unloading facilities be oriented away from public roads and adjacent residential uses.
- **Outdoor Storage:** Recommends that outdoor storage be provided to the side or rear of buildings and screened from roadways and lower-intensity uses.
- **Building Design:** Recommends that long, monotonous facades be avoided.
- **Signage:** Indicates that monument signage is preferred.
- **Transitions between Uses:** Recommends that lower-intensity uses and smaller-scale buildings be situated adjacent to existing residential development. Recommends that landscaped buffers also be provided and that building heights be limited on the perimeter of the project to minimize impacts that industrial development may have on adjacent uses.
- **Interconnected Street Network:** Recommends that an interconnected street network be provided to minimize access to major thoroughfares, along with shared driveways. Entrances should be designed to accommodate heavy truck traffic.

Most of the industrial and employment-focused designations have similar recommendations. *Employment Center* includes more detailed recommendations regarding building design, landscaping, and active transportation, since these areas are intended to have more of a campus-like environment. For projects within areas designated *Employment Center*, the draft plan recommends that no more than 30% of the gross project acreage be used for residential purposes.

Industrial Development: Visualizing Key Concepts

Existing vegetation is maintained within a roadside buffer, which is enhanced with decorative fencing. This buffer screens industrial development from view.



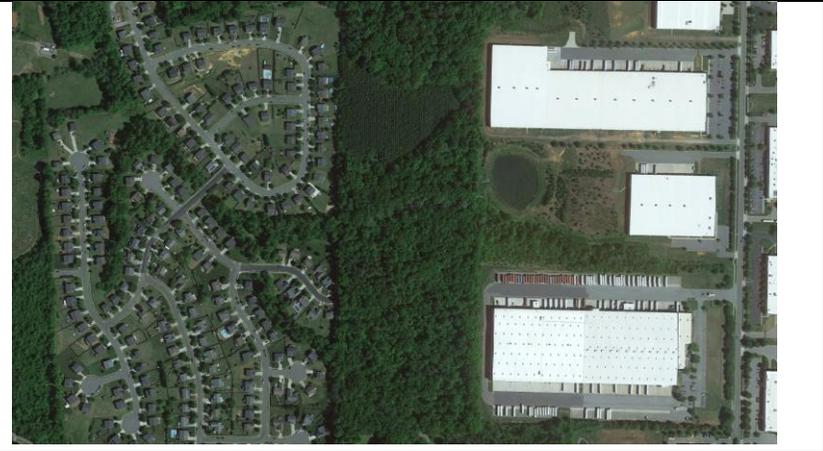
Light industrial uses incorporate high-quality materials onto street-facing facades. Windows, wall offsets, and changes in building height add visual interest.



Loading areas are located to the side and rear of buildings and screened from the view of public roads with a combination of walls and evergreen landscaping.



Wide buffers between residential and industrial uses help minimize negative impacts on residential uses. Existing vegetation should be preserved where possible.



Multi-Use Designation

The **Multi-Use** designation (called *Multi-Use* in the current plan) accommodates mixed-use development within the SSA. The following concepts are proposed within that designation:

- Emphasize that these areas are intended to accommodate employment-generating uses with no more than 50% of the project area (based on gross acreage) used for residential purposes (which is consistent with the current plan).
- Maintain the current recommendations regarding residential densities (up to 15 units/acre).
- Recommend that a phasing plan be provided to ensure that commercial uses are developed constructed prior to (or simultaneously with) residential uses (which is consistent with the current plan).
- Recommend that at least 25% of the project area be reserved as open space with a mix of active and passive recreational amenities.
- Recommend that coordinated landscaping be provided throughout the development to create a park-like environment.
- Recommend that landscaped buffers be provided along major thoroughfares.
- Recommend design features for each use type, encouraging coordinated architecture, the use of high-quality materials, and different architectural features to add visual interest. For residential buildings, recommend that the prominence of garages be minimized and that smaller-scale multi-family buildings are preferred over larger buildings.
- Recommend that lower-intensity uses be situated adjacent to existing residential development, and that other design techniques (landscaped buffers, building height, building size, etc.) be used to minimize impacts that higher-intensity multi-use development may have on adjacent uses.
- Recommend that multi-use projects have an interconnected street network that minimizes access points to adjacent thoroughfares.
- Provide more detailed recommendations regarding pedestrian/bicycle infrastructure within mixed-use development, as these projects are intended to have a high degree of walkability. Recommend that sidewalks, highly-visible crosswalks, and streetscape amenities (street trees, benches, lighting, etc.) be provided (which is consistent with the current plan).

Note: Mixed Use (MX) is not a future land use designation, but a zoning district codified within the zoning ordinance that accommodates mixed-use development. It is being recommended as an appropriate zoning district that can be applied within the *Multi-Use*, *Highway Commercial*, *Employment Center*, and *Multi-Family Residential* designations. When the MX district is used in *Multi-Use*, the proposed plan recommends that no more than 50% of the gross project area be used for residential uses (no more than 30% in areas designated *Employment Center*). The draft language also clarifies that residential uses include congregate living.

Multi-Use Development: Visualizing Key Concepts

Multi-use projects should include coordinated landscaping throughout the development to create a park-like environment, with landscaped buffers along major thoroughfares.



Multi-use projects may contain buildings that have a mix of uses, such as ground-floor commercial with residential units above. Architectural features can break up the massing of buildings and create an attractive streetscape. Parks and open space are distributed throughout these projects.



Multi-use projects may incorporate different uses on the same street. Consistent materials and architectural features can create a unified project. Street trees, sidewalks, and consistent pedestrian-scale street lighting can tie the different uses together.



Projects should incorporate wide sidewalks, street trees, and high-quality crosswalks to create a pedestrian-friendly environment.

