

11. EXISTING LAND USE

Culpeper County's current pattern of land use is the result of its history and location. At its inception, the County was agrarian in nature, with small rural communities developing at the crossroads. The Town of Culpeper, located at the approximate geographic center of the County, became the County Seat in 1759, and is the only incorporated town in the County. The Town of Culpeper continues to function as the business, commercial, service and cultural center for the County of Culpeper.

In more recent years, Culpeper County has become an extension of the Northern Virginia/Washington, D.C. economy. The rural nature of the County is being encroached upon as more families seek rural areas in which to live and more affordable housing. The widening of Interstate 66 and other road improvements have accelerated immigration to the County, which in turn has influenced the rural versus urban setting and the demand for services.

The total land area within the boundaries of Culpeper County is approximately 381 square miles or 243,840 acres. The Town of Culpeper encompasses approximately 7.3 square miles or 4,661 acres. The existing land uses in the County are distributed among the categories of land use identified in this chapter (see Map 11.1). Note that although a parcel of land may have a particular land use designation, its zoning may not match because the use existed prior to the zoning ordinance, or subsequent amendments to the zoning ordinance have taken precedence. Such uses are generally considered legal, non-conforming (grandfathered) uses. Other examples would include commercial use, via special use permit, on an agriculturally zoned parcel of land.

AGRICULTURAL / FORESTAL

Agricultural and forestal land uses comprised approximately 59.7 percent of the total land area in Culpeper County in 2015. This is a decrease of approximately 1.1 percent since 2009. There are 2,831 parcels in the land use tax program as of early-2015.

Table 11.1

LAND USE TAXATION			
	Acres	Percent of Land Use	Percent of County
Agricultural Use	85,780.11	58.9	35.2
Forestal Use	59,703.30	40.3	24.5
Total Acres in Land Use	145,657.41	100	59.7

RESIDENTIAL

Residential land use comprises a growing percentage of the total land area in Culpeper County. Table 11.2 below indicates the total acreage of parcels with dwellings. The acreage in this table includes some overlap with the acreage in Table 11.1, as many parcels with dwellings are large agricultural or forestal parcels.

Table 11.2

Acreage With Dwellings	
Zone	Acreage
A-1	73,375
RA	30,341
RR	116
R-1	9,984
R-2	285
R-3	202
R-4	15
Total	114,318

COMMERCIAL

Commercial land use has historically been a small component of overall land use in the County. The commercial base for Culpeper County lies almost entirely within the Town Corporate Limits, which has separate zoning classifications. This is rapidly changing, however. Major retailers and high-tech industries have located in Culpeper over the last five years, and more such development is planned which will continue to impact the figures shown in Table 11.3 below. It is important to note that the figures below do not reflect the significant amount of retail development which has occurred within industrial zoning districts.

Table 11.3

Commercial Acreage With Improvements	
Zone	Acreage
CC	1
CS	140
VC	3
PBD	6
Total	150

INDUSTRIAL

Industrial land uses in the County consist of light manufacturing, warehouses and warehouse distribution centers, trucking facilities, quarries and other similar facilities. Recent industrial growth in Culpeper County has increasingly included high tech uses such as the Terremark data center. Table 11.4 below provides industrial acreage with improvements. It should be noted that a significant portion of the acreage in Table 11.4 is actually commercial use lying within industrial zones.

Table 11.4

Industrial Acreage With Improvements	
Zone	Acreage
H I	330
L I	340
Total	673

INSTITUTIONAL

Institutional land uses consist of publicly owned property such as the Warrenton Training Center, the National Audio-Visual Conservation Center, Coffeewood Correctional Facility, and the local public schools and government offices. Other institutional uses include the Virginia Baptist Home, approximately 100 churches, and cemeteries located throughout the County, and the Culpeper Regional Airport.

PARCEL DATA

Table 11.5 summarizes the acreage and number of parcels in each of four major categories: (1) County-wide, (2) Agricultural, (3) Rural Area, and (4) Residential. Each category not only indicates the total number of parcels, but also the number of parcels in each of several size ranges. The agricultural, rural area and residential categories refer to formal zoning districts. This data is current as of January 2015.

The Culpeper County Planning Department maintains extensive information for each parcel located within the county. Layers of data are available for public use on the County GIS website.

Quick Link: [Culpeper County Online GIS](#)

Table 11.5

County Wide Parcel Data 2015						
Acreage	# of Parcels	%	Parcels w/ Dwellings	%	Vacant Parcels & Parcels w/ Misc. Structures	%
0-4.99 Acres	9,443	59	6,819	42	2,624	16
5-9.99 Acres	2,033	13	1,302	8	721	4
10-24.99 Acres	2,638	16	1,400	9	1,238	8
25-99.99 Acres	1,503	9	598	3	905	6
100 Acres+	507	3	224	2	283	2
Totals	16,124	100	10,343	64	5,771	36
Agricultural (A-1)						
Acreage	# of Parcels	%	Parcels w/ Dwellings	%	Vacant Parcels & Parcels w/ Misc. Structures	%
0-4.99 Acres	2,091	34	1,574	26	517	10
5-9.99 Acres	1,179	19	819	13	360	6
10-24.99 Acres	1,444	23	752	12	692	10
25-99.99 Acres	1001	17	413	7	588	10
100 Acres+	376	6	184	3	192	3
Totals	6,091	100	3,742	61	2,349	39
% of County Total Parcels		37.8		23.2		14.6
Rural Area (RA)						
Acreage	# of Parcels	%	Parcels w/ Dwellings	%	Vacant Parcels & Parcels w/ Misc. Structures	%
0-4.99 Acres	3,130	62	2,599	51	531	10
5-9.99 Acres	539	10	346	7	193	4
10-24.99 Acres	944	18	573	11	371	7
25-99.99 Acres	387	8	185	4	202	4
100 Acres+	94	2	48	1	46	1
Totals	5,094	100	3,751	74	1,342	26
% of County Total Parcels		31.6		23.3		8.3
Residential (R-1)						
Acreage	# of Parcels	%	Parcels w/ Dwellings	%	Vacant Parcels & Parcels w/ Misc. Structures	%
0-4.99 Acres	3,357	88.3	2,635	68.5	722	18.9
5-9.99 Acres	236	6.1	154	4	82	2.1
10-24.99 Acres	184	4.2	114	2.8	70	1.8
25-99.99 Acres	62	1.2	26	0.5	36	1.0
100 Acres+	8	0.2	4	0.2	4	0.2
Totals	3,847	100	2,933	76	914	24
% of County Total Parcels		23.9		18.2		5.7

EXISTING ZONING

Development in the County of Culpeper is regulated by its Zoning Ordinance and the official zoning map. The map identifies the location of various zoning districts which are regulated through the text of the Zoning Ordinance. The Zoning Ordinance is Appendix A of the Culpeper County Code and sets forth use limitations, bulk regulations such as setbacks and minimum lot size, and the procedures and permits for land development. There are currently fifteen different zoning districts in Culpeper County: two agricultural, six residential (including RMH), three commercial, two industrial and the Planned Unit Development District (PUD) and Planned Business District (PBD) for mixed use development. Table 11.6 lists the existing zoning districts, along with the acreage currently zoned for that district and the percentage that district encompasses within the County. The Residential Mobile Home District (RMH) is not included in the Table due to the minimal amounts of land zoned as such.

The use of these zoning districts is a key component for implementation of the Future Land Use Plan (Chapter 12) and the Village Center concept (Chapter 13). The Zoning Ordinance provides specific criteria for each of these districts. The Planned Unit Development District (PUD), a key component for Village Center implementation, was adopted on December 3, 1991. This district supports the Village Center concept and is intended to accommodate the development of large tracts of land and to provide incentives for design and flexibility for the creation of a more desirable, coordinated living environment than would be possible under the strict application of traditional zoning.

The process of establishing zoning classifications for Culpeper County is an ongoing process. The first Zoning Ordinance was adopted by the Board of Supervisors on December 5, 1967. Because zoning is an ongoing process, the use of a parcel and its existing zoning may not always match. If the use was established prior to the Zoning Ordinance, it is classified as a legal nonconforming use and may continue until such time as the owner wishes to alter or change the building or the property on which the use is located. Land zoned prior to an amendment to the Zoning Ordinance which alters that zone may also be considered a legal, non-conforming use.

Major amendments to the Zoning districts occurred in 1991 and in 2011.

ONLINE RESOURCES

[Culpeper County Planning & Zoning Department](#)

[Culpeper County Code](#)

“I think having land and not ruining it is the most beautiful art that anybody could ever want to own.” - Andy Warhol, American Artist

Table 11.6

Zoning District Acreage			
Agricultural District	Acreage	% of Total	% of County
A-1	163,190	75.3	66.9
RA	53,453	24.7	21.9
Total	216,643		88.8
Residential District	Acreage	% of Total	% of County
R-1	12,745	87.9	5.2
R-2	1,187	8.3	0.4
R-3	371	2.5	0.1
R-4	45	0.3	0.1
RR	146	1.0	0.1
Total	14,494		5.9
Planned Dev. District	Acreage	% of Total	% of County
PUD	2,606	99.5	1.07
PBD	13	0.5	0.004
Total	2,619		1.074
Commercial District	Acreage	% of Total	% of County
CC	3	0.6	0.001
CS	484	89.1	0.197
VC	56	10.3	0.025
Total	543		0.223
Manufacturing District	Acreage	% of Total	% of County
LI	1502	61.2	0.6
HI	953	38.8	0.4
Total	2,455		1.0
Other	Acreage	% of Total	% of County
Town	4,661.00		1.9
R-O-W & Misc.	2,425.00		1.0
GRAND TOTAL	243,840		100%

11.1 CULPEPER COUNTY

EXISTING LAND USE



RAPPAHANNOCK COUNTY

FAUQUIER COUNTY

MADISON COUNTY

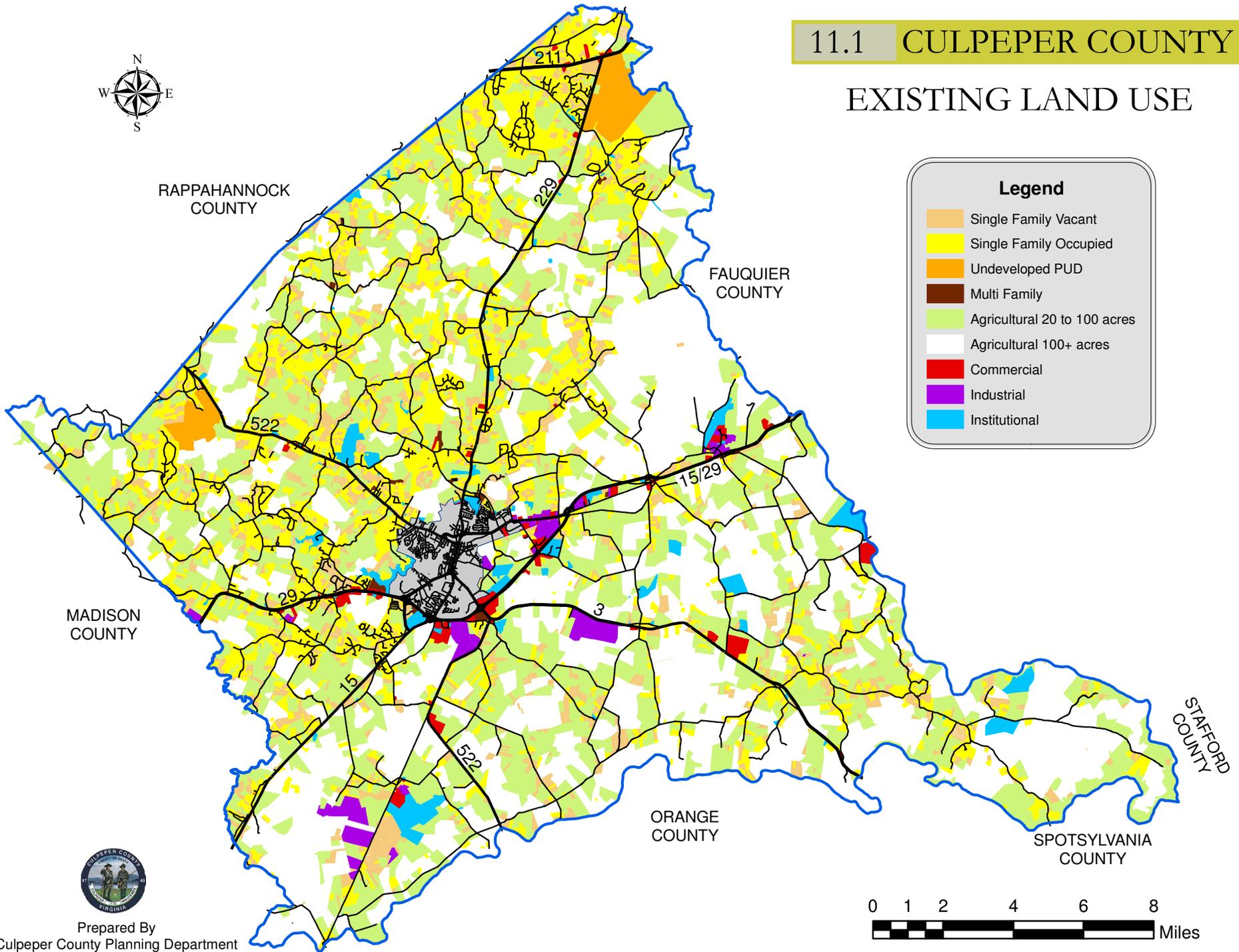
ORANGE COUNTY

STAFFORD COUNTY

SPOTSYLVANIA COUNTY

Legend

- Single Family Vacant
- Single Family Occupied
- Undeveloped PUD
- Multi Family
- Agricultural 20 to 100 acres
- Agricultural 100+ acres
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Institutional



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11.2 CULPEPER COUNTY

EXISTING ZONING



RAPPAHANNOCK COUNTY

FAUQUIER COUNTY

MADISON COUNTY

ORANGE COUNTY

SPOTSYLVANIA COUNTY

STAFFORD COUNTY

Legend	
ZONING	
	A1-Agricultural
	RA-Rural Area
	RR-Rural Residential
	R1-Residential
	R2-Residential
	R3-Residential
	R4-Residential
	PUD-Planned Unit Development
	CS-Commercial Services
	CC-Convenience Center
	VC-Village Center
	PBD-Planned Business District
	LI-Light Industrial
	HI-Heavy Industrial
	WATER



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