

The current CIP identifies projects to address stormwater management, roadway improvements, school construction/expansion/renovation, public safety, and solid waste management. In addition to these projects there are many other major initiatives underway in the county, such as the GIS/MIS system and improvement of parks and recreation facilities, to name a few.

3. Planning Issues

Based on the available data regarding government structures and county finances, the following planning issues have been identified:

- Augusta County currently participates in many interlocal agreements and regional programs. What other coordination opportunities are available, which make sense for the county to participate in? How could the county better coordinate with local governments and regional entities?
- Revenues have been increasing due to growth and are projected to continue to do so in the near term. How should the county balance increasing revenues from growth with increasing costs of providing public services to growth areas?
- The current real estate tax rate has been stable during the last 12 years but may need to be reevaluated in the future as a way to fund additional services to support existing populations and new growth. Should the county consider increasing property taxes as a way to help pay for the increasing costs of public services?
- Programmed capital improvements over the next five years will require a significant financial investment. How should the county plan for and prioritize funding for capital improvements projects?

L. Land Use

1. Existing Land Use

The land in Augusta County is currently being used for a variety of purposes such as residential, commercial, industrial, and agricultural developments. This section identifies the land uses that exist in the county as well as the amounts of land that are dedicated to particular uses.

According to the data made available from the county GIS office, and presented in Table 44, 35 percent of the land in Augusta County is classified as public land. This includes the National Forest and National Park as well as areas used for private timbering activities. These areas are public lands and are therefore not under the control of the county in terms of regulation and they are also not available for future development.

The second highest amount of land, 34 percent, is dedicated to agricultural use. Residential is the next highest use with almost 13 percent of the total land area in the county devoted to dwelling units, the majority of which are single-family homes. **Map 41** shows the locations of various land uses throughout the county.

Table 50. Existing Land Uses in Augusta County, 2005

Land Use Type	Acreage	Percent of Total
Public Lands	220,581	35.4%
Agricultural/Farm/Vacant	209,812	33.7%
Residential	78,217	12.5%
Government	6,592	1.0%
Commercial	2,246	0.4%
Industrial/Utility	1,958	0.3%
Institutional/Non-Profit	1,754	0.3%
Other/Unidentified/Urban	102,140	16.4%
Total	623,300	100.0%

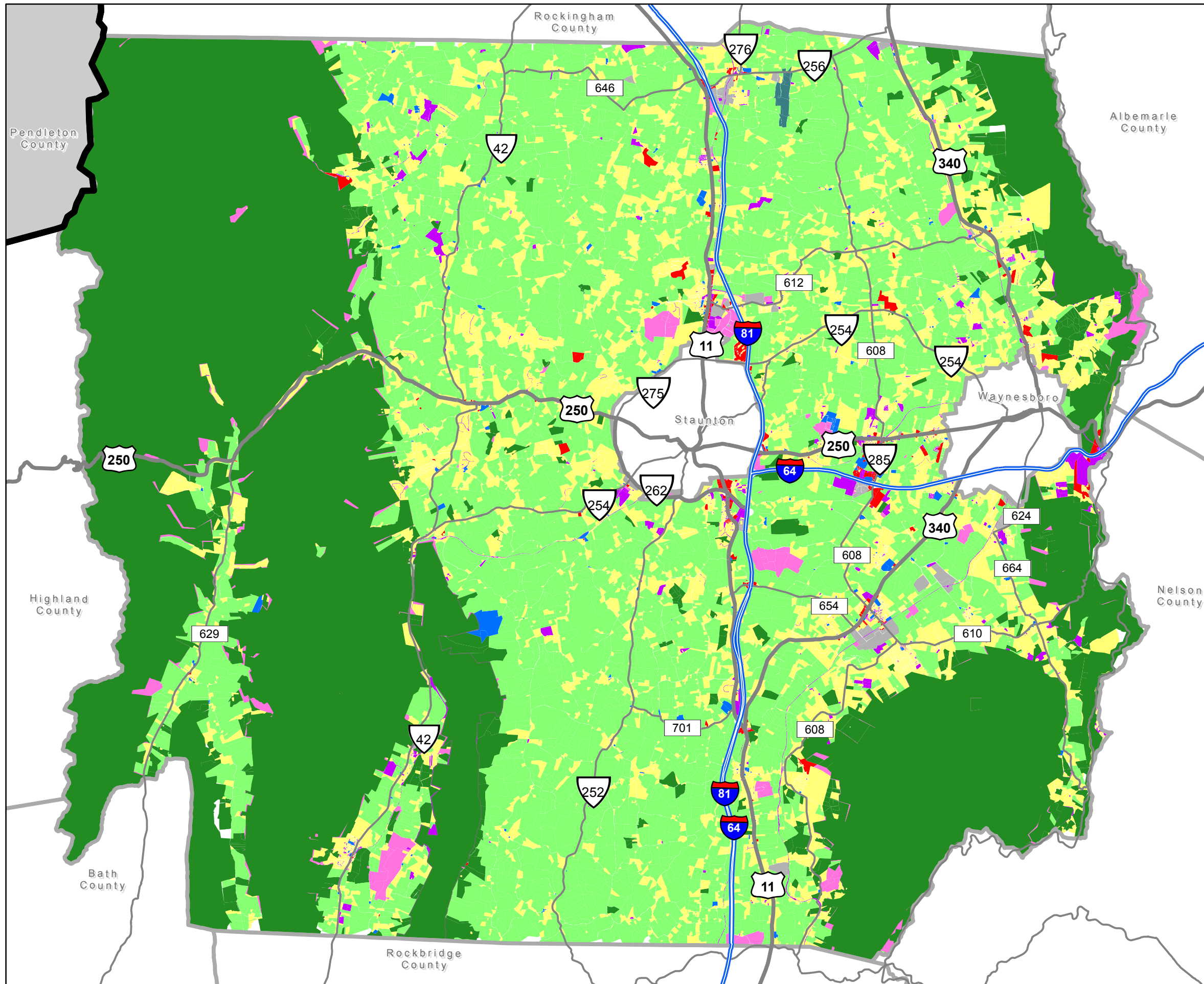
Source: Kimley-Horn and Associates, 2005.

Agricultural Lands

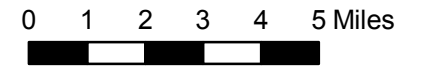
Agricultural land use in Augusta County is important for both economic and social reasons. Farming activities are a significant contributor to the local economy both past and present. Residents of the county are also generally supportive of protecting agricultural practices as a means to preserve the rural character of the county. According to the public opinion survey conducted by the county in June 2005, a majority (greater than 65 percent) of respondents indicated their support for agricultural protection through increased taxes for preservation programs, smaller lot sizes, and increased densities.

Despite a strong desire for preserving agricultural lands, many agricultural parcels in Augusta County are being converted to residential use. This loss of agricultural land is happening in one of two ways. One way is through owner sales of parcels to developers who then create large-scale residential developments. The other way is through the subdivision of portions of parcels that are then sold for individual residential development. The rate of subdivision is a concern for many residents as indicated in the public opinion survey. According to the survey results, 52 percent of respondents felt that the owners of agricultural parcels should not be able to subdivide for residential use whenever they choose.

Table 51 shows the distribution of agricultural parcels between the General Agriculture (GA) and Exclusive Agriculture (XA) zoning districts. According to the data, the majority of the acres in both GA and XA are in parcels that are 200 acres or more in size. In GA 50 percent of the total acreage is found in parcels 200 acres or larger in size. These large parcels account for 45 percent of the total acreage in the XA district. The largest number of parcels, however, falls within the category of 20 acres or less in both GA and XA. In GA, 87 percent of all parcels are less than 20 acres and in XA 62 percent is less than 20 acres.



- LEGEND**
- Landuse**
- Airport
 - Unidentified
 - Residential
 - Commercial
 - Industrial/Utility
 - Institutional/Non-Profit
 - Agricultural/Farm/Vacant
 - Government
 - Public Land
 - Interstate
 - US Highway
 - State Highway
 - West Virginia
 - State Boundaries



Source: Augusta County GIS

Map 41
Existing Land Use
 Augusta County
 Comprehensive Plan
 2007-2027




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 and Associates, Inc.

Table 51. Agricultural Land Uses by Zoning in Augusta County, 2005

Zoning Category	Number	<= 20 Acres	20-50 Acres	50-200 Acres	>200 Acres	Total
GA	Acres	36,978	27,059	52,495	116,015	232,547
	Parcels	10,701	881	583	105	12,270
XA	Acres	9,297	14,252	50,857	60,806	135,212
	Parcels	1,724	432	526	103	2,785

Source: Kimley-Horn and Associates, 2005.

Prime Farmlands

Map 42 shows the locations of the prime farmlands soils in the county according to the US Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). Prime agricultural soils are those that are best suited for continuous agricultural use. These soils account for approximately 11.5 percent of Augusta County’s soils. An additional 16.2 percent are recognized by the state as locally important for Augusta County farmers. These soils are usually found in areas that are not steep or stony and are well drained and watered. They can be found in isolated patches throughout the Shenandoah Valley, although they tend to be found in alluvial deposits near rivers. In addition to the prime soils, the county has other soil groups that while not classified as prime, are very productive, especially for pasture, one of the major agricultural uses in the county.

Agricultural/Forestal Districts

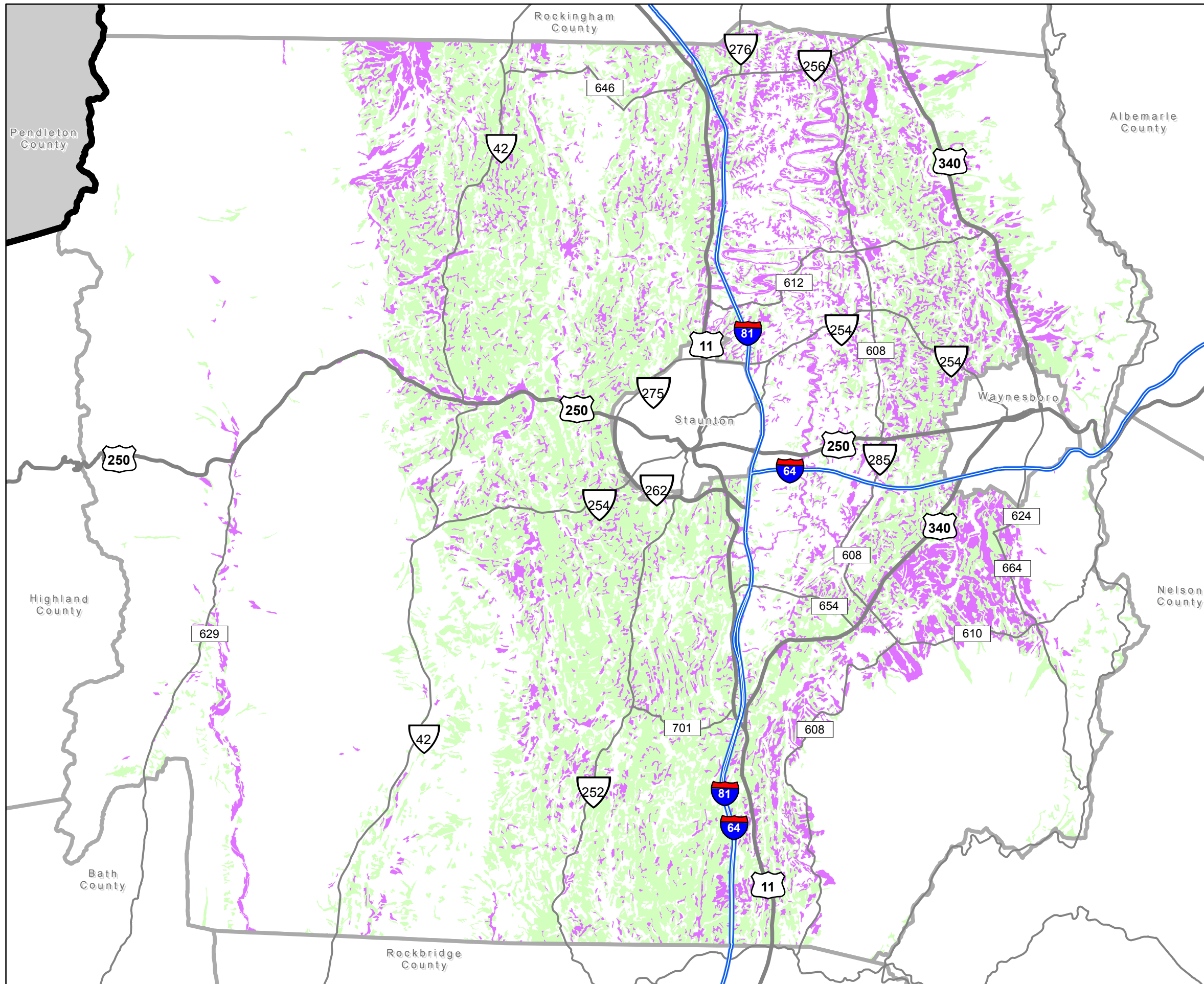
One way in which agricultural lands are currently being given a higher level of protection in the county is through Agricultural/Forestal Districts. As shown in **Map 43**, Augusta County has four Agricultural/Forestal Districts – Middle River (8,503 acres), North River (5,192 acres), Middlebrook (5,620 acres), and Crimora-Madrid (1,454 acres).⁴² The purpose of these districts is to reserve land for the production of agricultural products and timber. The districts are established according to state guidelines with the approval of the local governing body. There are 24 counties in Virginia that currently have Agricultural/Forestal Districts.

The Agricultural/Forestal District is a tool that is used to help maintain the rural character of the county, protect the productive agricultural forest land, and contribute to the preservation of the water supply and other natural resources. Other benefits that come with the use of Agricultural/Forestal Districts include⁴³:

- Land-use taxation;
- Certainty that agriculture will be maintained in the area;
- Protection from nuisance ordinances that would limit farming practices;

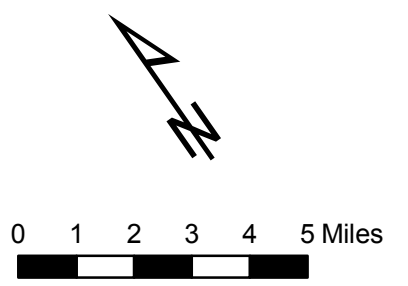
⁴² Augusta County Agricultural Task Force Committee, March 17, 2005 Meeting Minutes.

⁴³ Agricultural/Forestal Districts Fact Sheet, Valley Conservation Council, 2005.



LEGEND

- Prime Farmland
- Farmland of Statewide Importance
- Interstate
- US Highway
- State Highway
- West Virginia
- State Boundaries

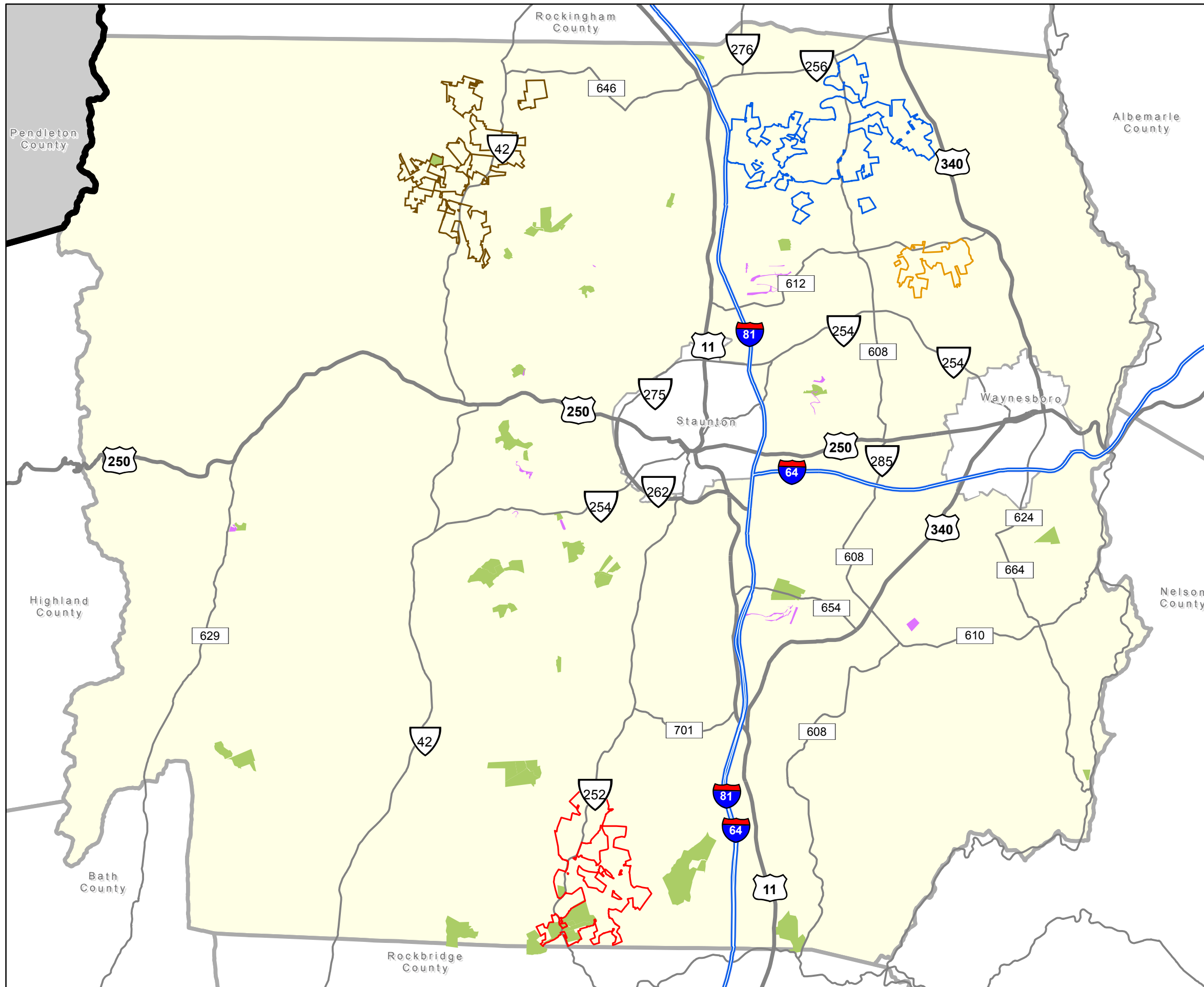


Source: USDA NRCS, 2005

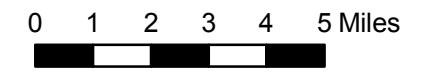
Map 42
Prime Farmlands
 Augusta County
 Comprehensive Plan
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- LEGEND**
- Riparian Easements
 - Conservation Easements
 - North River AFD
 - Middle River AFD
 - Middlebrook AFD
 - Crimora-Madrid AFD
 - Interstate
 - US Highway
 - State Highway
 - West Virginia
 - State Boundaries



Source: Augusta County GIS

Map 43
**Agricultural/
 Forestal Districts and
 Conservation and
 Riparian Easements**
 Augusta County
 Comprehensive Plan
 2007-2027




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- Assurances that the district will be taken into account in local planning decisions;
- Protection in most cases from government acquisition of land; and
- Restrictions on state policies and spending as they affect the district.

Once land is included in a district, land owners must agree not to subdivide their land to a more intensive non-agricultural land use (with the exception of family divisions) for a period of at least eight to ten years, depending on the district. Districts are required to have a core of contiguous properties of at least 200 acres. In order to qualify for inclusion in a district, parcels must be contiguous to the core or within 1 mile of the core. Land can only be removed from the district upon the death of the property owner (heirs can withdraw land) or through a petition to the Board of Supervisors.

Conservation Easements⁴⁴

Another mechanism currently in use in Augusta County for preserving agricultural lands is conservation easements. **Map 44** shows the locations of existing conservation easements in the county. A conservation easement is a voluntary legal agreement that allows land owners to transfer certain land use rights while retaining ownership and maintaining the right to continue certain practices on the land. An example of this would be a farmer who gives away the future development capabilities of his land in an easement but continues farming.

Conservation easements are usually given to non-profit land conservation organizations, such as the Virginia Outdoors Foundation, or to public entities, such as the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). The length of time for an easement can range from temporary limits, such as a number of years, to permanent controls that would survive conveyance of the land. According to Virginia code, a conservation easement must last for at least five years and must be in perpetuity in order to qualify for federal tax deductions. Additional tax benefits may be provided through a re-evaluation of the assessed value of the property based on the idea that the land would not be used to full development.

Land under conservation easements helps to continue agricultural vitality, preserve open space and wildlife habitat, protect natural resources, and maintain the rural character of the county. Easements are also effective tools for the preservation of historic resources.

2. Land Development Regulations

Augusta County has several land development regulations currently in place that affect the location and nature of development.

⁴⁴ Conservation Easements Fact Sheet, Valley Conservation Council, 2005.

Zoning Ordinance

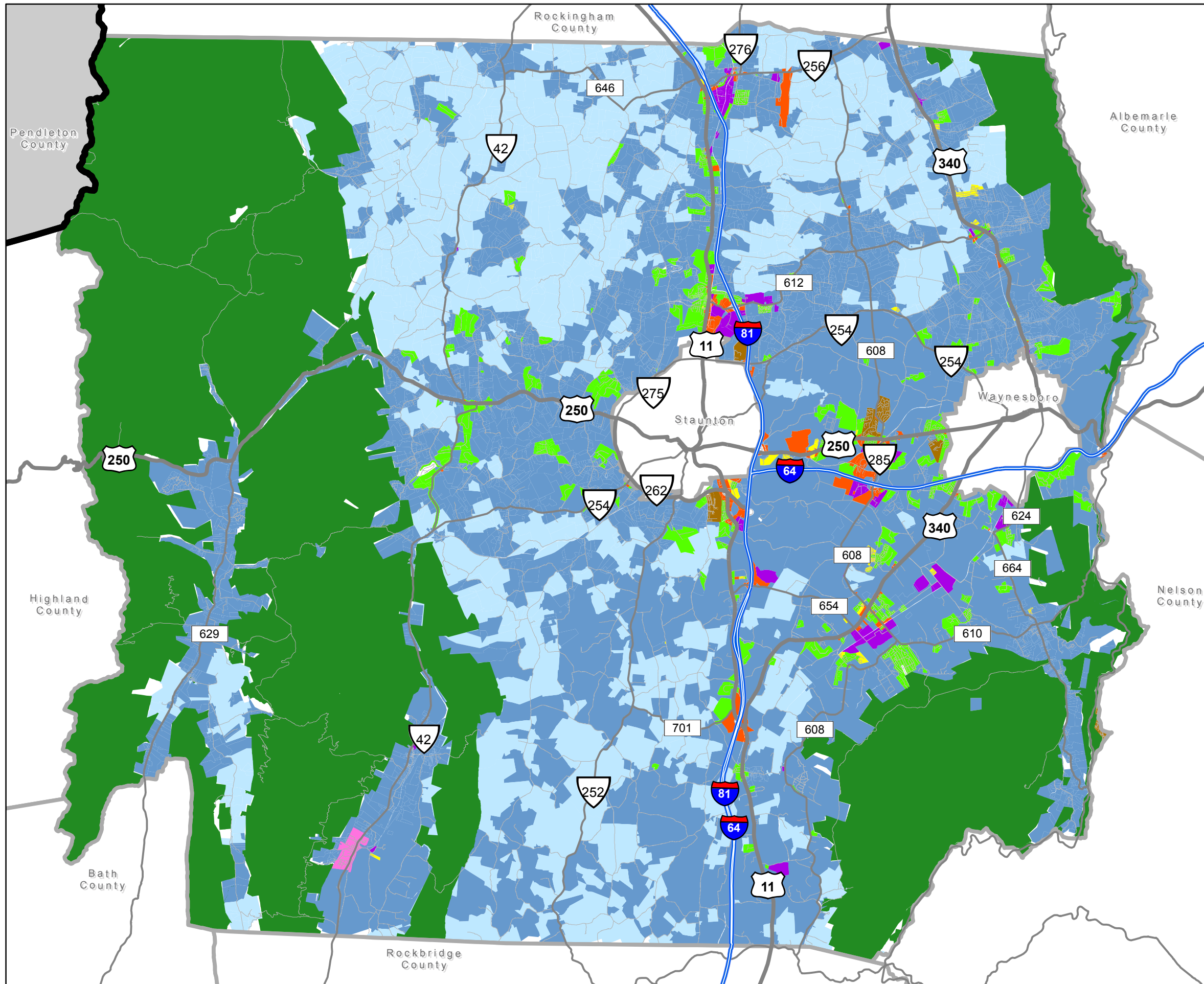
The county's Zoning Ordinance was last revised in 2002 and contains provisions for 13 separate zoning districts. The ordinance defines what types of land uses are allowed in each district. If a land use is specified as an allowable use in a district it is considered a "by-right" use. Any uses that are not considered by-right would require a rezoning or special use permit in order to be allowed. The ordinance also contains additional requirements for each district relating to the lot or structure such as lot sizes and widths, setbacks, and building heights and densities. The current districts include the following.

- Agriculture: General Agriculture and Exclusive Agriculture
- Single Residential Dwelling: Rural Residential, Single Family Residential, Duplex Residential, and Townhouse Residential
- Multiple Residential Dwelling: Manufactured Home Parks, Multifamily Residential
- Business: Airport Business, Limited Business, and General Business
- Industrial: General Industrial
- Mixed Use: Master Planned Community

Within the current Zoning Ordinance there are only three districts that do not permit some form of residential uses by right—Airport Business, General Business, and General Industrial. In all other districts, residential units ranging from single-family houses to apartments (depending on the district), can be developed without the need for rezoning or a special use permit.

Map 44 shows the existing zoning districts in the county which are described in greater detail below.

The two agriculture districts in the county include General Agriculture (GA) and Exclusive Agriculture (XA). The principal purpose of the GA district is to maintain the existing agricultural lands and prevent the encroachment of incompatible land uses while allowing development to occur at a reasonable density. The district is also intended to minimize the demand for unanticipated public improvements and services, such as public water and sewer, by reducing development densities and discouraging large scale development. The XA zoning district was created for those areas of the county whose predominant land use is devoted to agricultural activities. It is intended to protect and stabilize agriculture as an ongoing economic activity by permitting only those land uses and activities which are either agricultural in nature or act in its direct support. The emphasis in this district is on productive agriculture and only those residential uses supporting agricultural endeavors.



LEGEND

- Craigsville
- Public Land
- Zoning
- General Agriculture
- Exclusive Agriculture
- Single Residential Dwelling Districts
- Multiple Residential Dwelling Districts
- Business
- Industrial
- Mixed Use
- Interstate
- US Highway
- State Highway
- Streets
- State Boundaries
- West Virginia



Source: Augusta County

Map 44
Existing Zoning
 Augusta County
 Comprehensive Plan
 2007-2027




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Under the current Zoning Ordinance there is also a regulation, commonly referred to as the “Family Member Exception,” which applies to the GA and XA zoning districts only. This regulation states that lots created as a result of a sale or gift from the landowner to an immediate family member are not required to meet the same lot frontage standards as other lots in the district. Landowners can only create one family member exception lot per parcel per year. Although the regulation is labeled as an “exception,” current statistics indicate that the creation of new lots in the agricultural zoning districts often occur through the family member exception. During the past decade, almost half of all of the new lots created in the agricultural zoning districts were created through this method.

The single residential dwelling zoning category is made up of Rural Residential, Single Family Residential, Duplex Residential, and Townhouse Residential districts. The Rural Residential districts are for low density residential developments that are scattered among the agricultural lands and uses. Single Family Residential districts provide locations for single family dwellings on separate lots. Duplex Residential districts are suitable for single family residential units that use side-by-side duplexes at low to medium densities on public water and sewer. The Townhouse Residential districts are similar to the Duplex Residential districts except that they are for side-by-side townhouses.

The multiple residential zoning category includes Manufactured Home Park districts and Multifamily Residential districts. Manufactured Home Park districts are for areas that contain three or more manufactured housing units per lot and the lots are not owned by the individual residents. Multifamily Residential districts provide locations for multi-family residential developments at higher densities on public water and sewer.

The business districts include Airport Business, Limited Business, and General Business. Airport Business districts include areas for licensed airports and compatible offices and businesses. Limited Business districts are for limited business and commercial development near residential development. Permitted businesses will provide goods and services primarily to the nearby population. General Business districts provide locations for a variety of commercial and service related activities in concentrated locations where they will be convenient to residential areas and not incompatible with adjoining existing uses. This district is aimed at focusing commercial activities and thereby preventing scattered or strip development incompatible with adjoining existing uses.

General Industrial districts provide areas for manufacturing, industrial, and general wholesale and warehousing uses. These districts are typically located in Urban Service Areas served by public water and sewer. The county has one county owned industrial park, Mill Place Commerce Park, which is located along Route 612 in Verona and currently has 390 acres available and lots ranging from 2 to 28 acres in size. Additional land targeted for industrial development is located in Weyers Cave, Stuarts Draft, Fishersville, Lyndhurst, and Mint Spring.

Master Planned Community districts provide areas for developments where conventional zoning may be inappropriate. Master planned communities encourage variation in residential development by allowing deviation in lot size, bulk or type of dwelling, density, lot coverage and open space from what is required in other residential districts. In these districts planning is done for the entire development rather than on an individual lot basis.

Table 52 shows the amount of acres in each zoning district under the current ordinance. The acreages and percentages differ from those shown in **Table 50**. This is due to the fact that the zoning district table describes the amount of land that has been designated for each district, whereas the existing land use calculations describe the land as it has currently been developed.

Table 52. Acreage by Zoning District in Augusta County, 2005.

Zoning District	Acreage*	Percent of Total Zoned Acres
Agriculture	367,760	93.65%
Single Residential Dwelling	15,124	3.85%
Multiple Residential Dwelling	865	0.22%
Business	4,296	1.09%
Industrial	3,418	0.87%
Mixed Use	1,244	0.32%
Total	392,707	100.00

Source: Kimley-Horn and Associates, 2005.

* Acreage does not include National Forest, National Park, or unidentified lands that are not zoned.

In addition to these traditional zoning districts there are also several overlay districts. Overlay districts have additional zoning requirements that are superimposed upon existing zoning in specified areas. Overlay zones are commonly used when an area requires special protection or has a special problem. The existing overlay districts in the county are for floodplains, airports, public uses, and Urban Service Areas.

Subdivision Ordinance

The county's Subdivision Ordinance differentiates between major and minor subdivisions for administrative purposes. Major subdivisions are those which divide a parcel into three or more new parcels. They generally take place in areas zoned for business, industrial, or residential use and often require the dedication of land or facilities for public use, such as streets and water or sewer lines. Minor subdivisions are generally defined as those in which a tract is divided into three or fewer lots in a given calendar year, and are subject to less stringent requirements. Notably, the ordinance permits minor subdivisions of a single lot per calendar year in areas zoned for agricultural use and does not require any dedication of public facilities. These single lots are commonly converted to residential use

while remaining in agricultural zoning. Another way in which lots can be created more easily is through boundary line adjustments.

Erosion and Sediment Control

These regulations are to provide for the effective control of soil erosion, sediment deposition and nonagricultural runoff during and after development. The ordinance is designed to prevent accelerated degradation of properties, stream channels, waters and other natural resources. These provisions require that a plan for erosion and sediment control be approved and a permit be received prior to engaging in a land disturbing activity. The regulations are administered through the office of the County Engineer.

Stormwater Ordinance

Augusta County's Stormwater Ordinance requires that land development projects which receive subdivision or site plan approval must be served by an adequate storm drainage system. The ordinance requires that a storm drainage system be provided and that the system should generally be designed for a 25-year storm event.

3. Comprehensive Plan and Planning Policy Areas

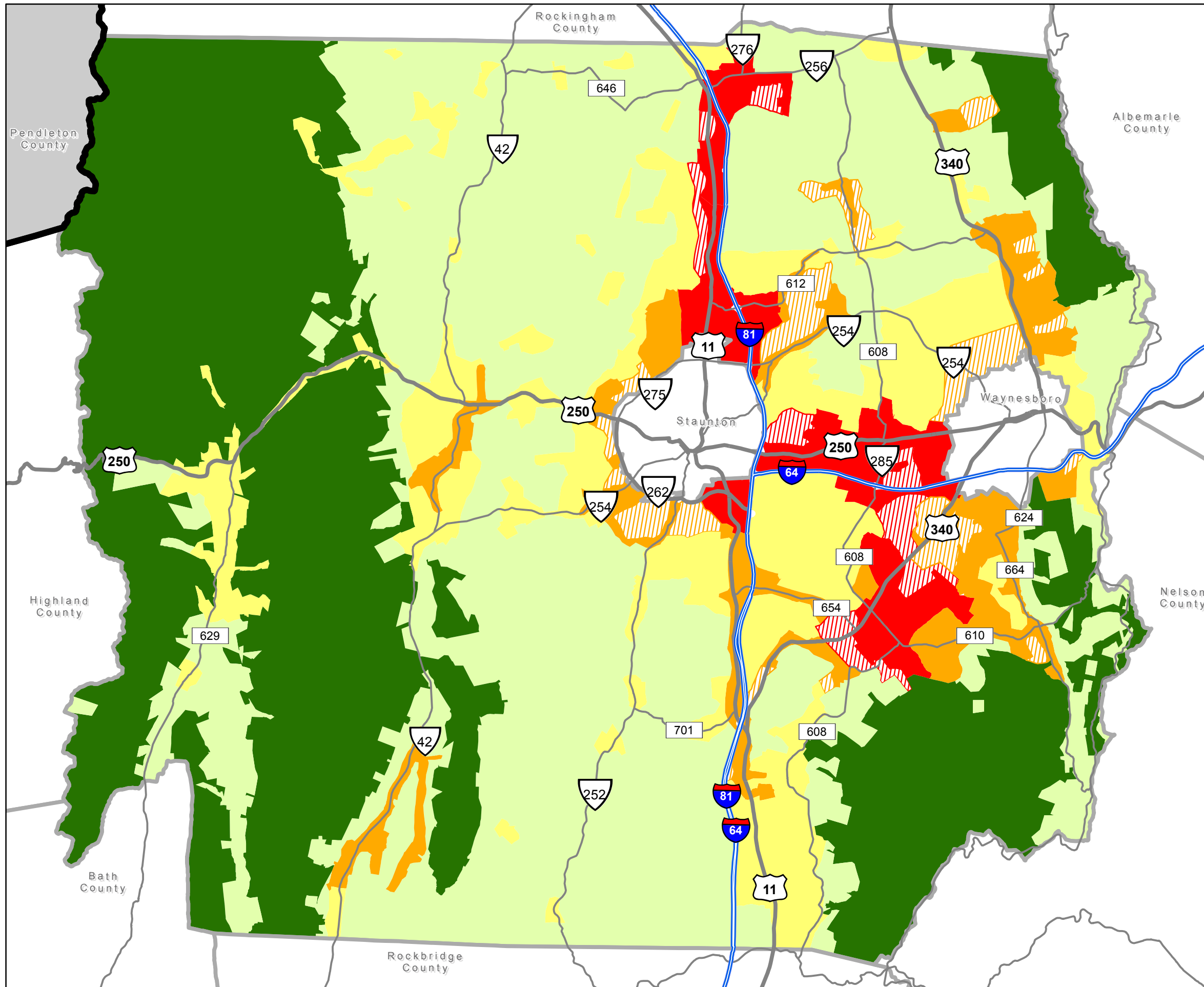
Augusta County's current Comprehensive Plan was developed in 1994. The plan identified general land use polices for new development, infrastructure, agriculture, economic development, transportation, and natural resources. The plan also defined specific Planning Policy Areas within the county: Urban Service Areas, Community Development Areas, Rural Conservation Areas, and Agricultural Conservation Areas, each with their own development goals and policies. These policy areas determine the types and amount of development that are planned to occur in each area. The Planning Policy Areas are shown in **Map 45** and described in greater detail below.

Urban Service Areas

Urban Service Areas are places that are appropriate locations for development of a full range of public and private land uses. Such areas have urban character, density, and use, or are expected to use at some time in the future, public water and sewer services. These areas are planned to accommodate 60 percent to 70 percent of future residential growth and 80 percent or more of future business and industrial development. The currently identified Urban Service Areas in the county are Fishersville, Stuarts Draft, Verona, and Weyers Cave. Potential Urban Service Areas are areas that are expected to be suitable for this level of development in the future (long-range).

Urban Service Areas are priority locations for:


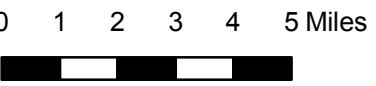
- Significant amounts of urban residential and employment growth
- Expansions of public water and sewer
- Local and regional public facilities





LEGEND

Planning Policy Areas

- Urban Service Area
- Potential Urban Service Area
- Community Development Area
- Potential Community Development Area
- Rural Conservation Area
- Agricultural Conservation Area
- Public Land
- Interstate
- US Highway
- State Highway
- West Virginia
- State Boundaries



 0 1 2 3 4 5 Miles
Source: Augusta County GIS

Map 45
2005 Planning Policy Areas
 Augusta County
 Comprehensive Plan
 2007-2027

- Most one-of-a-kind public facilities, such as hospitals
- Light, medium, and heavy industrial uses with adequate facilities and buffers
- Larger scale urban residential and commercial developments

Community Development Areas

Community Development Areas are defined as existing settlements, such as Churchville and Greenville, that are appropriate for moderate amounts of rural development and have existing public water or sewer systems in place or that have relatively good potential for utility extensions. These areas are planned to accommodate up to 20 percent of the future residential growth and up to 20 percent of non-farm employment growth. Potential Community Development Areas are locations where there is a long-term possibility of having either water or sewer extended.

Community Development Areas are priority locations for:

- Moderate amounts of small scale, rural residential and employment growth at marginally higher densities than in the Rural Conservation Areas
- Limited expansions of public water and/or sewer service
- Local public facilities to meet local population needs
- Limited amounts of small scale, low-intensity commercial uses to meet local needs, as well as small scale industrial uses

Rural Conservation Areas

Rural Conservation Areas are defined as places that are substantially subdivided or developed with residential uses, no public water or sewer service, and few existing intensive agricultural operations. Rural Conservation Areas are planned to accommodate up to 10 percent of total future residential growth and 80 percent of future rural residential growth.

Rural Conservation Areas are priority locations for:

- Moderate amounts of rural residential development on individual wells and septic fields, including clustered development
- Non-intensive agricultural and forestry activities

Agricultural Conservation Areas

Agricultural Conservation Areas are defined as having mostly farm or forest uses, the lowest overall density of residential uses, no public water or sewer services, and most of the county's intensive agricultural operations. These areas are planned to remain predominantly in agricultural and forestal uses with very little additional residential development. The Agricultural Conservation Areas are planned to accommodate less than 10 percent of the total future residential growth in the county and less than 20 percent of rural residential growth.

Agricultural Conservation Areas are priority locations for:

- Minimal, incremental amounts of very low density rural residential development on individual wells and septic fields
- A full range of long term agricultural, forestry and natural resource industry activities, including intensive agricultural operations

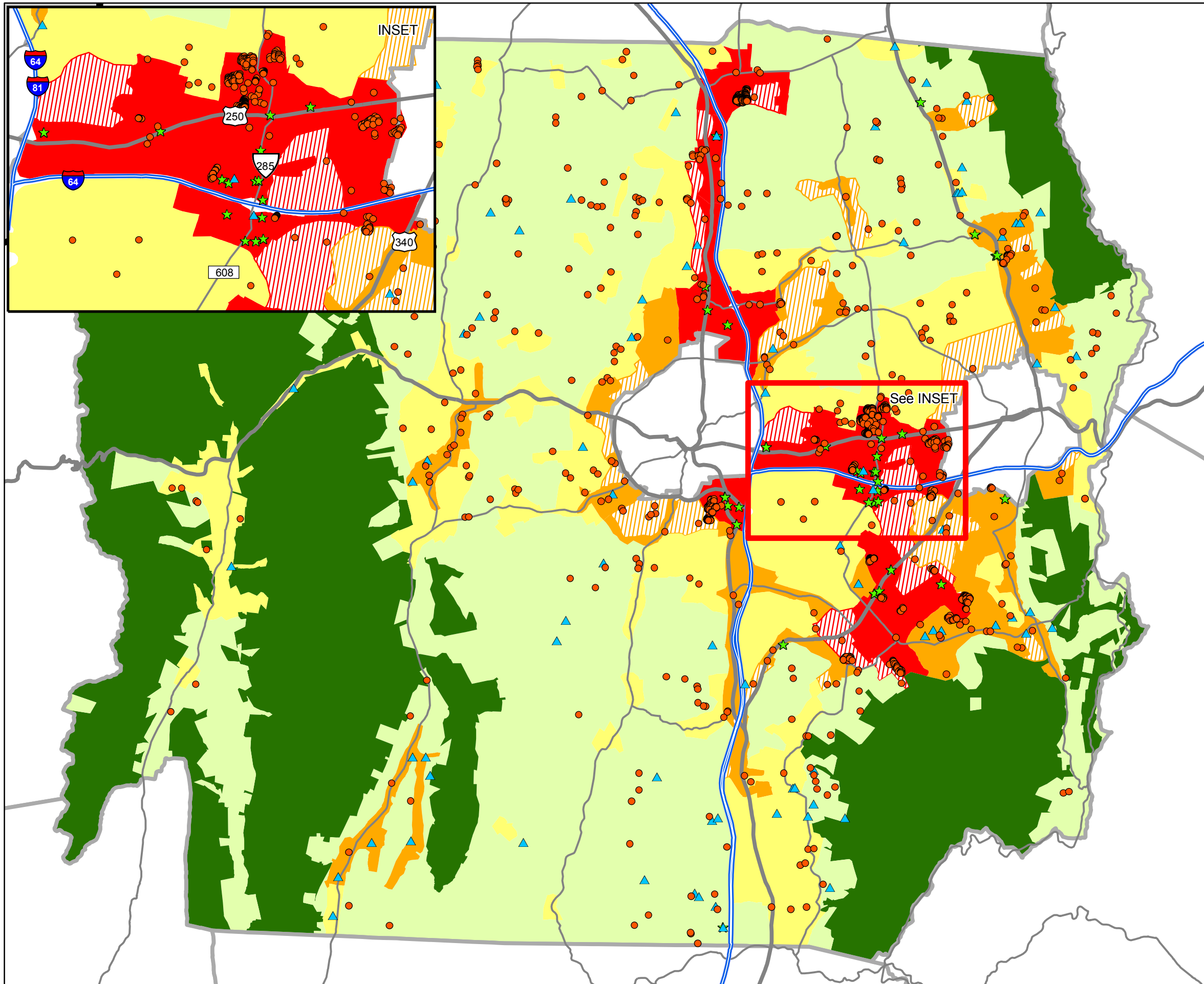
4. Development Patterns

The traditional development pattern of the county was generally one of clusters of structures in compact settlements. The cities of Staunton and Waynesboro have served as strong attractors of urbanized development. Rural villages dispersed throughout the county have acted as local centers of economic and social activity. Up until the last two decades new development had largely occurred as either an incremental addition to the fringes of existing urban areas or as infill on undeveloped lots within those areas. Over time the dispersion of subdivisions and individual rural lots has changed the shape of development patterns in the county.

The majority of new development in the county is residential with some commercial development. See **Table 53**. In 2003-2004, new development occurred in a few distinguishable clusters throughout the Urban Service Areas and Community Development Areas. The clusters occurred near the northern border of the county just east of Interstate 81, between Waynesboro and Staunton along the Route 250/I-64 corridor (in Fishersville), in the southern tip of Stuarts Draft and just south of Staunton, near Interstate 81. New development also occurred relatively evenly through the Agricultural Conservation Areas.

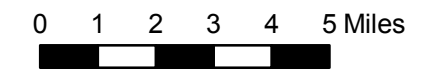
Another recent trend that has impacted development patterns in the county has been development in the areas of interchanges. The county has several major roadways and Interstates passing through it which have attracted certain types of development designed to service pass-through traffic. These developments contribute to traffic and infrastructure problems and have been largely left uncontrolled by the county.

Map 46 shows the patterns of development for new residential and commercial construction for 2003 and 2004. **Table 53** quantifies the amounts and types of new construction as depicted in that map.



LEGEND

- New Residential Housing Units
- ▲ New Manufactured Housing Units
- ★ New Commercial
- Planning Policy Areas**
- Urban Service Area
- ▨ Potential Urban Service Area
- Community Development Area
- ▨ Potential Community Development Area
- Rural Conservation Area
- Agricultural Conservation Area
- Public Land
- Interstate
- US Highway
- State Highway



Source: Augusta County GIS

Map 46
Development Patterns
 2003-2004 Building Permits
 Augusta County
 Comprehensive Plan
 2007-2027



**Table 53. Building Permits Issued by Type and Location
in Augusta County, 2003-2004**

Planning Policy Area	Development Type		
	Commercial	Single-Family Residential Units	Manufactured Housing Units*
Urban Service Area	30	604	3
Potential Urban Service Area	0	46	1
Community Development Area	5	113	19
Potential Community Development Area	0	67	3
Rural Conservation Area	0	93	18
Agricultural Conservation Area	2	161	35
Total	37	1,084	79

Source: Kimley-Horn and Associates, 2005.

* Manufactured Housing Units data includes both new units and replacement units.

Urban Service and Community Development Areas

Wayne District led the magisterial districts with 23.2 percent (105 units) of all single-family home building permits in the county in 2003. Wayne District's development is a factor of its proximity to Interstates 81 and 64. There are significant clusters of new construction in Fishersville, just north of I-64. In addition, new construction is clustered around Interstate 81, particularly in the Urban Service Areas just east of I-81 in Weyers Cave and west of I-81 in Jolivue. In the Middle River District, the majority of development is occurring in Urban Service Areas, Community Development Areas, or Potential Community Development Areas.

Agricultural and Rural Conservation Areas

In 2003-2004, approximately 15 percent of new residential development occurred in Agricultural Conservation Areas and 9 percent occurred in Rural Conservation Areas. The most significant residential development within Agricultural Conservation Areas has occurred to the east and west of Interstate 81, in the areas of Fort Defiance and New Hope in the Middle River District. Together, these areas account for 31.5 percent of single-family permits in Agricultural Conservation Areas.

5. Rezonings

Overall, acreage recommended for rezoning in the county has varied widely over the last ten years from a low of 114 acres in 2000 to a high in 1998 of 787 acres. In 2004, there were 17 requests for rezoning including two amendments for proffers and an amendment of a master-planned community. This was a decrease from the 22 requests received in 2003. The acreage requested for rezoning also decreased from 404 acres in 2003 to 284 acres in 2004.

The rezoning requests in 2004 were distributed throughout the seven magisterial districts. The Wayne and Beverley Manor Districts had the most requests with four each, while South River had three requests. Middle River and Pastures had two requests while North River and Riverheads each had one request in 2004. The majority of the rezonings took place in the most urban magisterial districts. The South River District had approximately 132 acres or more than 45 percent of the total acreage recommended for rezoning in 2004. In the other Districts, Middle River and North River had no land recommended for rezoning, and Pastures and Riverheads had land that was only recommended to be rezoned from Exclusive Agriculture to General Agriculture.

During 2004 there were four requests for rezoning in Urban Service Areas, six in Community Development Areas, one in Rural Conservation Areas, and two in Agricultural Conservation Areas. In 2004, less than 23 percent of the total rezoned land was located in the Urban Service Areas and more than 46 percent was located in Community Development Areas. In the Agricultural Conservation Area, 85 acres were rezoned, approximately 30 percent of the total rezoned acres, but remained in agricultural use.

The table below shows the rezoning acreages requested in 2004 by Planning Policy Area.

Table 54. Acreage Requested to be Rezoned in Augusta County, 2004

Policy Area	Approved	Denied	Total
Urban Service Area	96	44	140
Community Development Area	133	111	244
Rural Conservation Area	0	115	115
Agricultural Conservation Area	85	14	99
Total	314	284	598

Source: Augusta County Planning Commission Annual Report, 2004.

6. Planning Issues

Based on the available data regarding land use, the following planning issues have been identified:

- Residential development is the most frequent type of new development occurring in the county. While residential development has been occurring mainly in the Urban Service and Community Development Areas, agricultural land has also been converted to residential use at a fast rate. How should the county strike the right balance between residential and other types of development? What agricultural land preservation mechanisms should be put in place? How should land use regulations be used to direct residential development into the Urban Service and Community Development Areas of the county? How can land use incompatibility issues be resolved?

- New development is clustering around the Interstates creating traffic and quality of life issues. What land use controls, such as overlay districts, should be considered to help manage growth better around interchanges?
- Residential development is rapidly occurring in the Agricultural Conservation Areas due to subdivision. How should the Subdivision and Zoning Ordinances be changed to better control the amount of subdivision allowed in the Agricultural Conservation Areas to prevent further fragmentation of agricultural lands?
- Rezoning have been declining in recent years and are occurring mostly in the Community Development Areas. How should rezonings be used to help effectively target growth in the desired areas?
- The largest percentage of land in the county is classified as forest, predominantly due to the public lands. How should the land that is controlled by the county be managed?

M. Buildout Analysis

A buildout analysis is an impact assessment of the current land use regulations in a given area. The analysis depicts what growth will occur under current zoning designations and future land use policies. This information can then be used to estimate the effects on land availability, services, and infrastructure from the future growth.

For the Augusta County buildout analysis, existing zoning criteria and Planning Policy Area descriptions were applied to individual vacant and underdeveloped parcels throughout the county. The results illustrate the number of residential units that could be built in each zoning district and Planning Policy Area in the future. The results also illustrate future development using a worst-case scenario based on the maximum densities allowed for each analyzed parcel.

1. Zoning Buildout Analysis

Density requirements form the basis for the zoning buildout analysis. This information was available in the zoning designations and associated lot requirements found in the county Zoning Ordinance. For the purposes of this analysis, only the zones that permit residential development were analyzed, as residential development is the most frequent new development in the county and creates the majority of the impacts to public services and infrastructure. The analysis provides no information on the future amounts of commercial or industrial development and subsequently assumes that all zoned residential land will be developed for residential use only. The analysis also assumes that all agricultural zoned land will become residential as residential uses are allowed by right in these areas. The zones that were considered include: General Agriculture (GA), Exclusive Agriculture (XA), Rural Residential (RR), Single Family