

## **Land Use Policies Related to Sustainability from August 2022 Draft of the 2040 Comprehensive Plan**

**LAND USE POLICY 8:** Purposefully integrate a variety of residential uses near transportation hubs, activity, and employment centers to create vibrant multimodal communities.

### **ACTION STRATEGIES**

- LU8.1** Support higher density residential uses in transit-oriented developments such as Town Centers and Activity Centers located near mass transit stations like the Virginia Railway Express.
- LU8.2** Consider travel modes other than the automobile to better connect and integrate residential uses with non-residential uses.
- LU8.3** Strategically designate residential land use to encourage development of housing to accommodate the population growth projections with consideration for expanding affordable housing and multigenerational households.
- LU8.4** Adopt Complete Streets policies that improves safety and mobility in new development and study existing neighborhoods that need to improve the local street and pedestrian connections to enhance the community.
- LU8.5** Utilize the Multimodal System Plan to integrate land use and multimodal transportation planning.

**LAND USE POLICY 13:** Encourage and support agribusiness and agritourism as an integral part of the County's economy and as an opportunity to incentivize the preservation of agricultural land.

### **ACTION STRATEGIES:**

- LU13.1** Implement the AF, Agriculture Forestry District, as a designation to protect and preserve agricultural and forests lands throughout the County.
- LU13.2** Identify and evaluate flexibility of land use classifications that could offer primary or secondary uses that allow co-location of agribusiness and agritourism activities.

**LAND USE POLICY 14:** Advocate for land use policies that increase affordable housing options, access to amenities and open public spaces and encourage the development of healthy neighborhoods that enhance quality-of-life for all residents.

**ACTION STRATEGIES:**

- LU 14.1** Affordable housing should be provided in proximity to employment opportunities and availability to transit.
- LU 14.2** Identify communities with unmet LOS needs and develop a plan to equitably meet those needs.
- LU 14.3** Land use and development decisions should involve an equity lens to be consistent, predictable, fair, and cost effective, while minimizing impacts associated with gentrification.
- LU 14.4** Identify appropriate opportunities to expand the supply of usable and accessible open space in the area through improvements to existing open space areas and the development of new public spaces as part of any redevelopment or revitalization efforts.

**LAND USE POLICY 15:** Identify and acknowledge communities that may not have equitable access to amenities, resources, or opportunities to better understand existing conditions as well as the area's history while directing planning efforts to address these deficiencies.

**ACTION STRATEGIES:**

- LU 15.1** Identify Equity Emphasis Areas within Prince William County and incorporate these areas into the County's GIS mapping system.
- LU 15.2** Identify effective opportunities to engage individuals of communities identified as Equity Emphasis Areas.
- LU 15.3** Provide enhanced mobility and accessibility options to the traditionally underserved population groups in the EEAs.
- LU 15.4** Establish methods for benchmarking equity and measuring outcomes in local and Countywide planning.
- LU 15.5** Study and identify food desert locations throughout the County using the USDA's methodology, County GIS, and utilize the Grocery Store Market study to ensure that opportunities to improve accessibility to affordable and healthy food are provided.
- LU 15.6** Utilize flexibility of uses in land use classifications that encourage economic and community-based opportunities such as farmer markets as an interim strategy to minimize the impacts of Food Desert locations.

**LAND USE POLICY 16:** Ensure that the land use decision making process includes consideration of mitigating localized environmental and public health impacts, especially in low-income and people-of-color communities.

**ACTION STRATEGIES:**

**LU 16.1** Develop a checklist to use as part of the land use planning, zoning, and permitting review process that will ensure consideration and mitigation of localized environmental and public health impacts, especially in low-income and people-of-color communities.

**LU 16.2** Public outreach should involve a variety of methods in the effort to reach all members of the community especially those underserved and those most likely to be impacted by a land use project.

**SUSTAINABILITY**

According to the EPA, sustainability is the management of resources that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Sustainable development is the process for improving the long term economic, environmental, and social well-being of a community through wise land use planning. The traditional sprawling growth pattern of low-density development, which disperses residents over a wide area, consumes resources at a rate greater than can be replenished and is not sustainable. To address this concern, the County's Land Use Plan will integrate other elements such as energy use, environment, housing, infrastructure, and transportation considerations toward a common goal of building and establishing lasting communities and neighborhoods and meeting the County's Climate and Resiliency goals.

---

1. U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Environmental Justice webpage.  
<http://www.epa.gov/environmentaljustice>, March 2021.

Below is a Venn Diagram showing both the cooperative and competitive interests associated with sustainability. The goal of successful sustainability involves balancing these interests to meet the present and future needs of community.

- Economic growth and resilience
- Affordability
- Energy security and reliability
- Infrastructure
- Workforce



- Water quality and quality
- Climate & Air quality
- Soil quality
- Greenhouse gas emissions
- Preservation

- Diversity of Jobs
- Living Wages
- Access to Amenities
- Affordable Housing Options
- Community Education
- Quality of Life

*Figure 1: Sustainability Venn Diagram*

**LAND USE POLICY 17:** Promote sustainable land development that provides for a balance of economic opportunity, social equity including environmental justice, and protection of the natural environment.

**ACTION STRATEGIES:**

**LU17.1** Encourage a mix of complementary land uses and project designs that ensure the long-term sustainability including cultural, environmental and economic health of both the individual development and the broader community.

- LU17.2** Residential subdivisions should be planned to conserve open space and natural resources, protect agricultural operations, reduce impervious footprints, use sustainable development practices, and provide community amenities, where appropriate and consistent with applicable laws.
- LU17.3** Encourage land use activities and patterns, such as buffers and open space, to protect surface and groundwater resources.
- LU17.4** Encourage development projects to restore, connect and protect natural habitats and sensitive lands.
- LU17.5** Encourage adaptatively reuse of significant architectural resources for housing or community facilities.
- LU17.6** Provide complete streets in new development that offer multimodal transportation systems designed and operated to accommodate all users with less reliance on the automobile to reduce carbon emissions.
- LU17.7** Promote the adaptive use of existing buildings and infill development as effective sustainable best practices to minimize development pressures of undeveloped areas.

**LAND USE POLICY 18:** Encourage a land use pattern that incorporates and protects environmental features in accordance with the goals and objectives of the Environment Plan of the Comprehensive Plan, Prince William County's 2021-2024 Strategic Plan, and contributes to the County's Climate and Resiliency goals.

**ACTION STRATEGIES:**

- LU18.1** Integrate new development into the natural landforms and encourage minimizing the amount of impervious surface areas in new development.
- LU18.2** Encourage using low maintenance pervious paving and, when appropriate, remove paved areas in existing developments to minimize runoff.
- LU18.3** Recognize existing forest areas as important features for carbon sequestration, protecting water quality, contributing to the overall beauty of the County, and promoting ecological diversity.
- LU18.4** Preserve and protect the natural terrain, drainage, and canopy areas in new development in accordance with action strategies of the Environment Plan.
- LU18.5** Preserve historic and champion trees and other specimen trees in cooperation with the County Arborist.

- LU18.6** Encourage the integration of public open space areas with neighboring properties to avoid fragmentation of open spaces and natural areas.
- LU18.7** Encourage the placement of buildings to minimize impacts to Environmental Resource Protection Areas such as steep slopes, particularly near important natural resource areas, such as perennial streams.
- LU18.8** Align new roads to follow the natural contours of the land. Incorporate DCSM road standards that will allow greater preservation of the natural terrain and vegetation especially areas with mature trees.
- LU18.9** Encourage re-vegetation with appropriate indigenous species and the restoration of natural landscape features to mitigate the negative impact of development on native plant and animal communities.
- LU18.10** Encourage the control of exotic nuisance plant species, where appropriate.
- LU18.11** Protect and improve water quality through the application of stormwater control measures for new development and redevelopment projects.

**LAND USE POLICY 19:** Encourage sustainable land use development that reduces Greenhouse Gas “GHG” emissions and the carbon footprint of development.

**ACTION STRATEGIES:**

- LU19.1** Aspire to attain the COG targets for reduction in GHG emissions, attaining renewable sources goals and other action strategies of the Sustainable Growth goals as identified in the Prince William County 2021-2024 Strategic Plan, through land use planning best practices.
- LU19.2** Encourage land use development that offers multimodal options including emphasis on pedestrian and bicycle facilities, advanced transportation technology, and alternative fuel sources.
- LU19.3** Encourage site development to use energy efficient and low impact design through the use of environmental features and landscaping.
- LU19.4** Promote the use of alternative energy sources including renewable energy technology, microgrids, and energy storage that reduce the dependence on high emission energy sources and can provide systematic energy resilience.
- LU19.5** Evaluate and amend the Design and Construction Standards Manual to include design guidelines and incentives for energy efficiency for new and renovated buildings.

**LU19.6** New public facilities, rezoning and special use permit applications should include designs that provide energy efficient construction of buildings that minimize the carbon footprint and explore the use of renewable energy when feasible.

**LU19.7** Implement a retrofitting program for energy efficiency for all public facilities.