

Article 4 Rural Preservation District (RP)

(Adopted 3/28/95-Amended through 06/10/2025)

Section 1 - Statement of Intent

The general intent of this district is to recognize the predominant rural character of Caroline County, much of which is devoted to open space type uses, such as, but not limited to, crop farms, non-intensive agricultural operations and forests. This district is established for the specific purposes of maintaining the rural character and facilitating existing and future crop farms and non-intensive agricultural operations, the conservation of natural resources and discouraging suburban sprawl. This district encompasses generally rural areas where urban services such as water and sewer are not planned.

It is further recognized that some areas of the County are planned for future development but do not yet have public facilities, utilities or the transportation system in place. In areas as designated, this district shall serve as a holding zone, until such areas are appropriate for development.

Section 2 - Permitted Principal Uses and Structures

1. Crop farms, silviculture and non-intensive agricultural operations.
2. Single Family Dwellings, detached.
3. Places of Worship.
4. ~~Lodges and Clubs.~~ Repealed 03/28/2000
5. Nurseries and Greenhouses (wholesale).
6. Game Preserves, Wildlife Sanctuaries and Conservation Areas.
7. Public Facilities (excluding landfills).
8. Public Utilities (Transmission and Distribution).
9. Manufactured Houses, subject to the following conditions:
(Amended 9/26/95)
 - (a) Such units are attached to a permanent foundation;
 - (b) Such units are skirted with an approved all weather material.
10. Cemetery, family.
11. Family Divisions, subject to the following conditions:
(Amended 11/25/97)
 - (a) The minimum lot size shall be two (2) acres;
 - (b) The lot area and other dimensional requirements shall be the same as that for a two (2) acre lot in the RR-2 Zoning District;
 - (c) The parent tract shall maintain the minimum lot size required in the RP zoning district or ½ the size of the original lot size, whichever is less;

- (d) Overall sketch plan showing future proposed family divisions shall be provided;
- (e) Common driveway entrances shall be utilized in accordance with Section 5.20 of the Subdivision Ordinance.

12. Private Schools (Adopted 06/10/25)

Section 3 - Permitted Accessory Uses and Structures

Uses and structures which are customarily accessory and clearly incidental and subordinate to permitted principal uses and structures, including:

1. Wayside stands for the display and sale of products produced on the premises (excluding processed products).
2. Garages and domestic storage buildings.
3. Home Occupations, minor.
4. Family Apartments, subject to the following conditions:
 - (a) Such a unit shall not be occupied by more than three (3) persons, at least one of which must be the natural or adopted parent, grandparent, child, grandchild, brother, or sister of the owner and occupant of the single family residence on the same lot;
 - (b) Such a unit shall contain no more than 1,000 square feet of living space;
 - (c) No dwelling units other than the principal structure (a single-family dwelling) and one such family apartment shall be located on a lot;
 - (d) When such a unit is no longer needed by a member of the immediate owner's family and the three (3) year period following the date it passes final inspection by the County Building Official has expired, the unit shall be considered a nonconforming use and as such can be rented to anyone.
5. Parish House or Rectory (accessory to places of worship).
6. Cemetery (church).
7. Temporary Uses (Amended 8/22/2000)
 - (a) A Manufactured House for Purposes of Housing Farm Labor subject to the following conditions:
 - (1) The applicant shall be the owner of the farm on which the manufactured home is to be located;
 - (2) Not more than one farm tenant structure for each fifty acres of land devoted to agricultural uses shall be permitted;
 - (3) The manufactured home must be skirted so that the undercarriage is not visible;
 - (4) The sewage disposal and water supply systems for the manufactured home be approved by the Caroline County Health Department;
 - (5) At least one occupant of the manufactured home shall be employed full-time on the subject farm;

- (6) A temporary zoning permit may be issued for a period not to exceed five years. At least thirty (30) days prior to the expiration of the permit, permittee shall apply to the Zoning Administrator for a renewal of the temporary zoning permit. Upon the determination by the Zoning Administrator that all the conditions under which the permit was issued have continued to be complied with, and that there are no changed conditions, the Administrator shall renew said permit for an additional five year period. If, however, the permittee has not complied with permit conditions, or conditions have changed, the Zoning Administrator shall revoke the temporary zoning permit.
 - (7) There shall be no tenant house available on the farm and no dwelling on the farm rented to a family without at least one member working full-time on the farm. Nothing in this shall be construed to permit the owner of the farm to occupy the home.
 - (8) For the purpose of this Section, the term "farm" shall be defined as land used for the production of crops; the raising of pasturing of livestock; the raising of hay for livestock, either for income producing equine pursuits or the production of cattle to produce beef, milk and other dairy products; for the raising of poultry and sale of chickens and eggs; or for the growing of fruit. However, no such use shall qualify as a "farm" use unless the person conducting same shall demonstrate annual gross sales or anticipated annual gross sales of \$10,000 or demonstrate sufficient need to justify one full-time farm employee;
 - (9) The temporary zoning permit shall be obtained prior to locating a manufactured home in accordance with this Section.
- (b) A Single-Section Manufactured House for a Medical Hardship subject to conditions:
- (1) Only one such manufactured home shall be located on the parcel;
 - (2) The manufactured home shall be accessory to a single family residential dwelling;
 - (3) The manufactured home shall house a member of the immediate family;
 - (4) Upon elimination or correction of the hardship, the manufactured home shall be removed;
 - (5) Zoning permit shall be valid for five (5) years. Prior to expiration, application may be made for a new Zoning Permit;
 - (6) Failure to comply with these conditions shall void the permit.

~~(c) Turkey Shoots or Other Temporary or Seasonal Events. Repealed 08/18/15~~

- ~~(1) The duration of the event shall not exceed five (5) consecutive days.~~
- ~~(2) The event or events shall not exceed fourteen (14) days combined in any calendar year.~~
- ~~(3) Not more than four (4) events are permitted in any calendar year.~~
- ~~(4) The proposed event shall not result in any noise, glare, dust or other noxious elements that adversely affect the use of neighboring properties.~~

(c) Yard Sales (Accessory to residential uses) (Adopted 08/18/15)

- (1) The duration of the event shall not exceed three (3) consecutive days.
- (2) Not more than three (3) events are permitted in any calendar year

(d) Seasonal Events (Adopted 08/18/15)

- (1) The duration of a single event shall not exceed three (3) consecutive days, with a cumulative total not to exceed twenty four (24) days in any calendar year.
- (2) The proposed event shall not result in any noise, glare, dust, or other noxious elements that adversely affect the use of neighboring properties.

8. Family Day Homes (Adopted 07/24/2001)

Six (6) to twelve (12) children subject to issuance of an Administrative Permit in accordance with Chapter 15.2-2292 of the Code of Virginia.

No accessory use or structure shall be permitted until the principal use or structure has been established.

Section 5 - Special Exception Uses with Board of Supervisor's Approval

1. Animal Hospitals and Veterinarian Clinics.
2. Kennels, Commercial.
3. Sand and Gravel Extraction and Sales. (Amended 8/24/04)
4. Airports.
5. Campgrounds/Camping Areas.
6. Sanitary Landfills (governmental).
7. Equestrian facilities (spectator)
8. Training Centers for Handicapped Persons.
9. Sawmills.
10. Public Utilities - generation.
11. Adult Homes and Nursing Homes.
12. Child Care Facilities.
13. Bed and Breakfast.
14. Home Occupations, Major.
15. Professional Office subject to the following conditions:
 - (a) The minimum parcel size shall be fifty (50) acres;
 - (b) A minimum of eighty (80) percent of the property shall remain in open space.
 - (c) The facade of the structure shall resemble a single family dwelling or agricultural building. Architectural drawings shall be submitted with the site plan.
 - (d) Parking shall be located to the rear of the structure.
 - (e) No subdivision of the property shall be permitted.
 - (f) A site plan shall be submitted and approved in accordance with Article XV, Section 14 of the Zoning Ordinance.

- (g) A landscaping plan shall be submitted and approved with the site plan.
 - (h) Other conditions as provided for in Article XVII, Section 11 of the Zoning Ordinance may be required.
- 16. Convents, Monasteries and Religious Retreats.
- 17. Housing for Seasonal Farm Labor, subject to the following conditions:
 - (a) Minimum parcel size of fifty (50) acres;
 - (b) Housing shall be only for the employment needs for farms in Caroline County;
 - (c) Housing units shall be occupied from April 15 to November 15 only. No residential occupancy shall be permitted from November 15 to April 15;
 - (d) No more than one such housing unit shall be permitted per parcel;
 - (e) Housing units shall be designed and constructed for such housing needs; for farm employees only and single sex occupancy;
 - (f) Farm housing must meet Virginia Department of Health standards for well and septic;
 - (g) Any other conditions that may be imposed by the County pursuant to Article XVII, Section 11 of the Zoning Ordinance.
- 18. Golf Clubs and Golf Courses.
- 19. Rural Commercial Recreational Uses subject to the following conditions:
(Amended 7/28/98)
 - (a) The minimum acreage for commercial recreational structures and uses shall be two (2) acres.
 - (b) On-site supervision of events shall be maintained at all times.
 - (c) The proposed sites shall have direct access to a road designated as a Class 1 hard surface secondary road.
 - (d) The proposed site shall be of a size and shape appropriate for the proposed use and be situated so as to provide adequate buffering to protect adjacent development from potentially adverse effects.
 - (e) A site plan shall be submitted in accordance with the requirements of Article XV, Section 14.
 - (f) All rural commercial recreational structures and uses shall not produce sound levels which exceed sixty (60) decibels during hours of operation as measured at the nearest property line.
 - (g) The use shall also be subject to the standards and conditions as may be applicable pursuant to Article XVII, Sections 10 and 11.
- 20. Radio/TV Studio, Office and Broadcasting Facilities. (Adopted 4/14/98)
- 21. Communication Facilities (Repealed and Replaced 5/25/04)
- 22. Clubs and Lodges (Adopted 03/28/2000)
- 23. Special Events Facility – a facility where private weddings and parties, and other similar events which shall not be open to the public are held with invited guests not to exceed 300.
(Adopted 08/26/03)
- 24. Contractor's Office, Equipment, Storage, and Sales Facilities. (Adopted 05/25/04)
- 25. Family Divisions where the property does not meet the provisions of Article 4, Section 2.11. (Adopted 10/26/04)

Requirements for Approving Non-Conforming Family Subdivision

The Board of Supervisors may approve a special exception for a family subdivision which does not meet the lot size requirement as set forth in Section 2, subsection 11 of this Article provided that the Board of Supervisors determines that the family subdivision is consistent with the intent of the County Comprehensive Plan and results in the promotion and preservation of the rural character of the County. The Board may approve the special exception provided that the proposal promotes the health, safety, and general welfare of the public and meet the following criteria:

1. The purpose of the family division is solely to provide for the housing needs of immediate family members.
 2. The granting of the special exception shall allow the family division to comply with the land use designation of the comprehensive plan.
 3. A concept plan shall be submitted and approved as a condition of the special exception. The concept plan shall identify all proposed and anticipated future family divisions. Actual transfer may not occur until some future date.
 4. All proposed lots shall be required to have an approved drainfield location shown on the concept plan.
 5. The minimum size of all lots shall not be less than one (1) acre.
 6. All lots shall be accessed by a minimum of a fifty (50) ft. access easement with a minimum of travel service width of twenty (20) ft.
 7. In granting the special exception, the Board of Supervisors may impose conditions regarding the location, character and other features of the proposed family division as it may deem necessary to the public interest; and it may require a guarantee or bond to remain in effect until compliance with such conditions has occurred.
 8. This amendment shall not apply to pre-existing recorded family subdivisions.
26. Antique Shop (Adopted 02/08/05)
27. Nursery and/or Greenhouse (Commercial) (Adopted 3/21/06)
28. Therapeutic Health Facility subject to the following conditions:
(Adopted 1/09/07)
- (a) The minimum parcel size shall be fifty (50) acres;
 - (b) A minimum of fifty (50) percent of the property shall remain in open space,
 - (c) Structures shall meet the setbacks for the Rural Preservation District; set forth in Article XII, Section 1 of the ordinance;
 - (d) The exterior of any new structures shall resemble a single family dwelling or agricultural building. Elevations shall be submitted with the site plan for review and approval;

- (e) Appropriately trained and licensed medical personnel shall be on-site and/or on-call at all times;
 - (f) Subdivision of the property which is subject to the special use permit is prohibited;
 - (g) A site plan shall be submitted and approved in accordance with Article XV, Section 14 of the Zoning Ordinance;
 - (h) A landscaping plan shall be submitted and approved with the site plan;
 - (i) Other conditions as provided for in Article XVII, Section 11 of the Zoning Ordinance may be required.
29. Artist Studio in which the artist/operator does not reside on the property.
(Adopted 6/12/07)
 30. Golf Course, Major (Adopted 09/09/08)
 31. Private Roads in rural subdivisions subject to the standards in Article 15, Section 8, Development Standards, paragraph L - Standards for private road subdivisions. (Adopted 8/11/09)
 32. Community Administrative Office (Adopted 03/26/13)
 33. Boarding School (Adopted 04/09/13)
 34. Community Use (Adopted 03/26/13)
 35. Educational Use, Outdoor (Adopted 06/10/25)
 36. Rural Resort (Adopted 09/23/14)
 37. General Store (Adopted 09/23/14)
 38. Museum (Adopted 09/23/14)
 39. Property Manager's Residence (Adopted 3/25/14)
 - ~~40. Minor Solar Energy Project (Adopted 05/25/21) Repealed 11/10/22~~