

Agricultural & Forestal Districts

Presentation to Sully District Council of Citizens Associations

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The Agricultural and Forestal District Program

- The Agricultural and Forestal (A&F) District program is designed to preserve and protect open spaces, forested areas, and agricultural lands in Fairfax County.
- The program allows property that meets certain criteria to be taxed on the use value of the land rather than the market value; in other words, the value of the land for growing crops, or in a conserved state, rather than as fully developed property.
- In exchange for the reduction in taxes, the property owners agree to abide by specific Ordinance Provisions adopted with the approval of their A&F District.
- The Provisions require all district owners to not intensify the use of their land for the life of the District, with exceptions for expansions or improvements to certain existing agricultural or forestal uses on the property.
- The Provisions also include requirements to comply with a Soil and Water Quality Management Plan, a Forest Management Plan, or other commitments to address specific or other commitments to address specific environmental concerns, such as erosion control or endangered species management.

Statewide or Local Significance Districts

- A&F Districts may either be of Statewide Significance or of Local Significance.
- The authority for the establishment of A&F Districts of Statewide Significance is derived from Title 15.2, Chapter 43 of the Code of Virginia, entitled “Agricultural and Forestal Districts Act.”
- The authority for the establishment of Local A&F districts is derived from Title 15.2, Chapter 44 of the Code of Virginia, entitled the “Local Agricultural and Forestal Districts Act”.
- On June 30, 1983, Fairfax County enacted supplemental legislation governing A&F Districts within the County, which consisted of the following sections of the Fairfax County Code: Chapter 114, entitled “Agricultural and Forestal Districts of Statewide Significance Ordinance”, and Chapter 115, entitled “Local Agricultural and Forestal Districts Ordinance”.
- Local districts must be at least 20 acres in size, and are limited to ownership of a single family; statewide districts must be at least 200 acres in size, and can include unrelated owners.
- While designation as an Agricultural & Forestal District qualifies properties for use-value taxation, both types of districts must also apply separately with the Department of Tax Administration (DTA) for land use assessment for the specific agricultural and/or forestal uses, as required by Title 58.1 of the Code of Virginia.

A&F District Advisory Committee

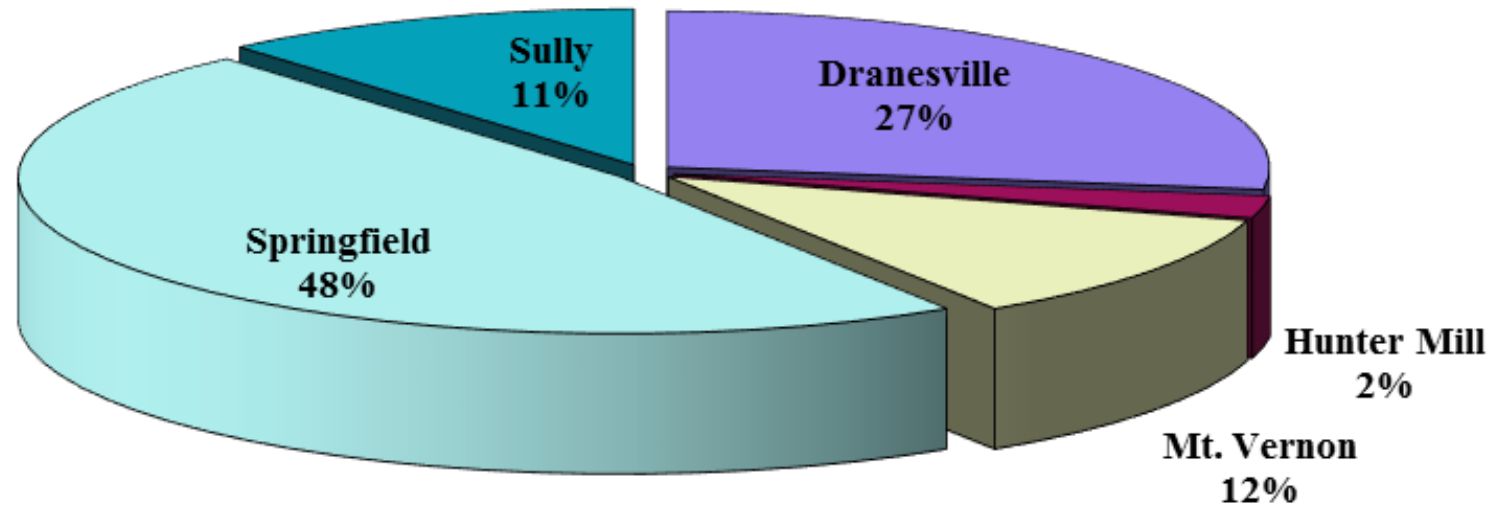
- The state enabling legislation requires the County to maintain an A&F District Advisory Committee (AFDAC), consisting of a combination of agricultural and non-agricultural landowners, the County's chief property assessment officer, and one member of the local governing body.
- The Fairfax County AFDAC meets several times a year to review and provide recommendations to both the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors on applications for establishment or renewal of districts.
- The AFDAC met three times in 2016 and twice in 2017 to review and make recommendations on pending A&F applications.

Local and Statewide A&F Districts by Magisterial District as of 2016

Magisterial District	No. of Local Districts (% of total)	No. of State Districts (% of total)	Changes Since 2015	No. of Total Districts (% of total)
Dranesville	11 (27.5%)	1 (25.0%)	-1	12 (27.3%)
Hunter Mill	1 (2.5%)	0 (0%)	-	1 (2.3%)
Mt. Vernon	4 (10.0%)	1 (25.0%)	-	5 (11.4%)
Springfield	19 (47.5%)	2 (50.0%)	-	21 (47.7%)
Sully	5 (12.5%)	0 (0%)	-	5 (11.4%)
Total	40	4	-1	44

There are no A&F Districts located in the Braddock, Lee, Mason, or Providence District

A&F Districts by Magisterial District

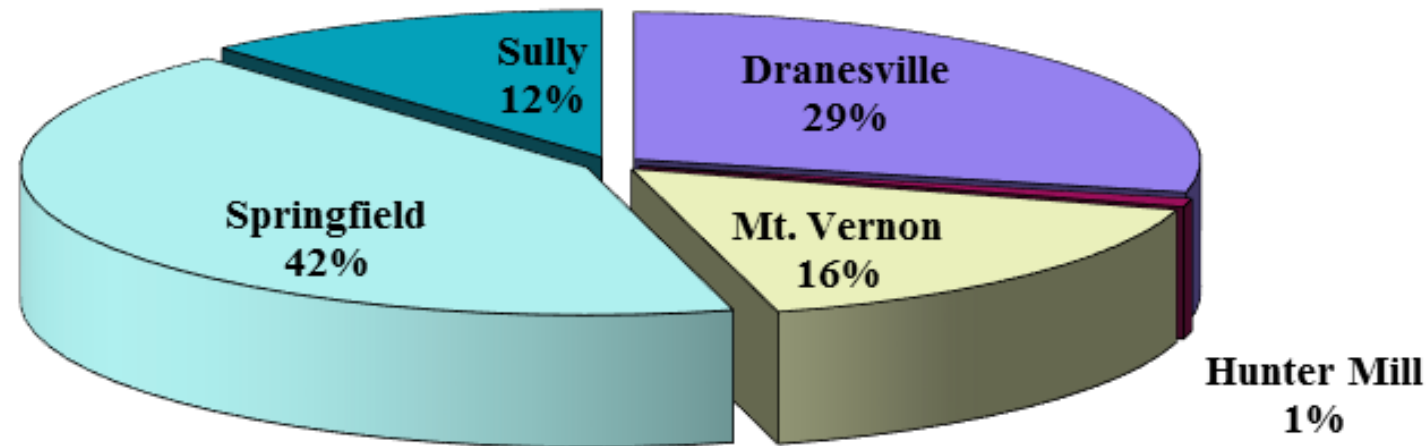


A&F Districts are currently located in five of the nine magisterial districts, with 75% of the districts being located in either the Dranesville or Springfield District.

Acreage in Local and Statewide A&F Districts by Magisterial District

Magisterial District	Acreage of Local Districts (% of total)	Acreage of State Districts (% of total)	Changes Since 2015	Total Acreage (% of total)
Dranesville	396.94 (23.4%)	469.98 (35.2%)	-36.08	866.92 (28.6%)
Hunter Mill	27.19 (1.6%)	0 (0%)	-	27.19 (0.9%)
Mt. Vernon	208.63 (12.3%)	287.65 (21.5%)	-	496.28 (16.4%)
Springfield	707.62 (41.7%)	579.43 (43.3%)	+16.21	1287.05 (42.4%)
Sully	354.75 (20.9%)	0 (0%)	-	354.75 (11.7%)
Total	1,695.13 (56% of total)	1,337.06 (44% of total)	-19.87	3,032.19

Acreage in A&F Districts by Magisterial District



- There are a total of 3,032 acres in the A&F District program in Fairfax County, which equates to approximately 1.2% of the land area of the County.
- Approximately 71% of all of the acreage in the A&F District program is located in the Dranesville and Springfield magisterial districts.
- Although only four of the 44 A&F Districts are statewide districts, 44% of the land incorporated into all A&F Districts is in these four statewide districts.

Local A&F Districts by Size

Size in Acres	Number of Local Districts	Percent of Total
Less than 25 acres	14	35.0%
25 - 49.99	18	45.0%
50 - 74.99	2	5.0%
75 - 99.99	2	5.0%
> 100	4	10.0%
Total	40	100%

- The Local A&F Districts range in size from just above 20 acres to approximately 130 acres.
- 90% percent of all Local A&F Districts are less than 100 acres in size; 80% of all Local A&F Districts are less than 50 acres in size.
- It should be noted that on 31 July 1995, the Board of Supervisors approved an amendment to Chapter 115 of the County Code which reduced the minimum acreage requirement for Local A&F Districts from 25 to 20 acres.

Statewide A&F Districts

District	Application Number	Magisterial District	Acres	Percent of Total
Patowmack Farm	AR 80-D-001-3	Dranesville	469.98	35.2%
Belmont Bay Farms	AR 92-V-001-02	Mt. Vernon	287.65	21.5%
Kincheloe	AF 2013-SP-001	Springfield	374.29	28.0%
Whitehall	AA 83-S-004-2	Springfield	205.14	15.3%
Total			1337.06	100%

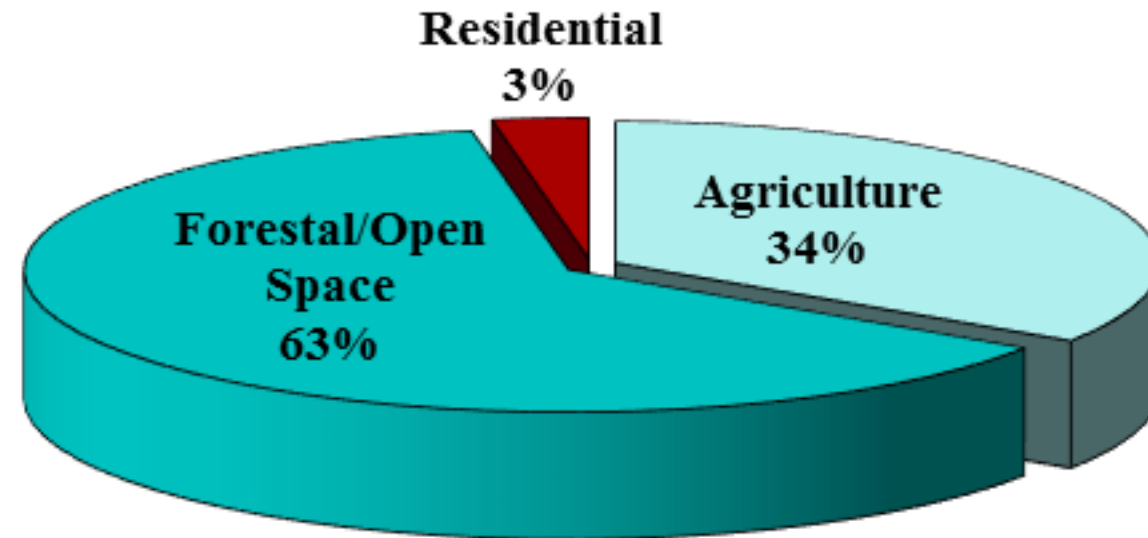
- There have been a total of seven Statewide Districts in the history of Fairfax County's program.
- The Sappington District (AA 91-Y-002) withdrew via expiration in 2001; portions of which later became Park Authority property, in 2010.
- The majority of the Mason Neck District was acquired by the Bureau of Land Management in 2001; Stone Bridge was acquired by the Fairfax County Park Authority in 2005.
- In 2013, two new statewide districts were established. Kincheloe Local combined with Podolnick to create Kincheloe Statewide. Whitehall Local converted to a statewide district.
- The acreage shown is that of the districts as they currently exist, and does not include portions which may have been withdrawn in the past.

Acres of A&F Land Uses in Program

Magisterial District	Acres of Agriculture (% of total)	Acres in Forest or Conservation (% of total)	Acres of Residential (% of total)	Total Acres
Dranesville	311 (36%)	533 (61%)	23 (3%)	867
Hunter Mill	14 (52%)	12 (44%)	1 (4%)	27
Mt. Vernon	102 (21%)	383 (77%)	11 (2%)	496
Springfield	339 (26%)	911 (71%)	36 (3%)	1287
Sully	280 (79%)	61 (17%)	15 (4%)	355
Total	1046 (34%)	1900 (63%)	86 (3%)	3032

Percentage of A&F Land Uses in Program

This chart shows the percentages of Agricultural, Forestal/Open Space, and Residential land uses within district properties.



Districts that Contain Environmental or Historic Resources

- The following Figure shows the percentage of districts that contain:
 - designated Resource Protection Areas (per the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Ordinance)
 - Environmental Quality Corridors (per County Environmental Policy),
 - identified historic resources, or
 - have a high likelihood of containing historic resources
 - Districts that contain or might contain historic resources include an Ordinance Provision allowing limited Park Authority access to survey for artifacts

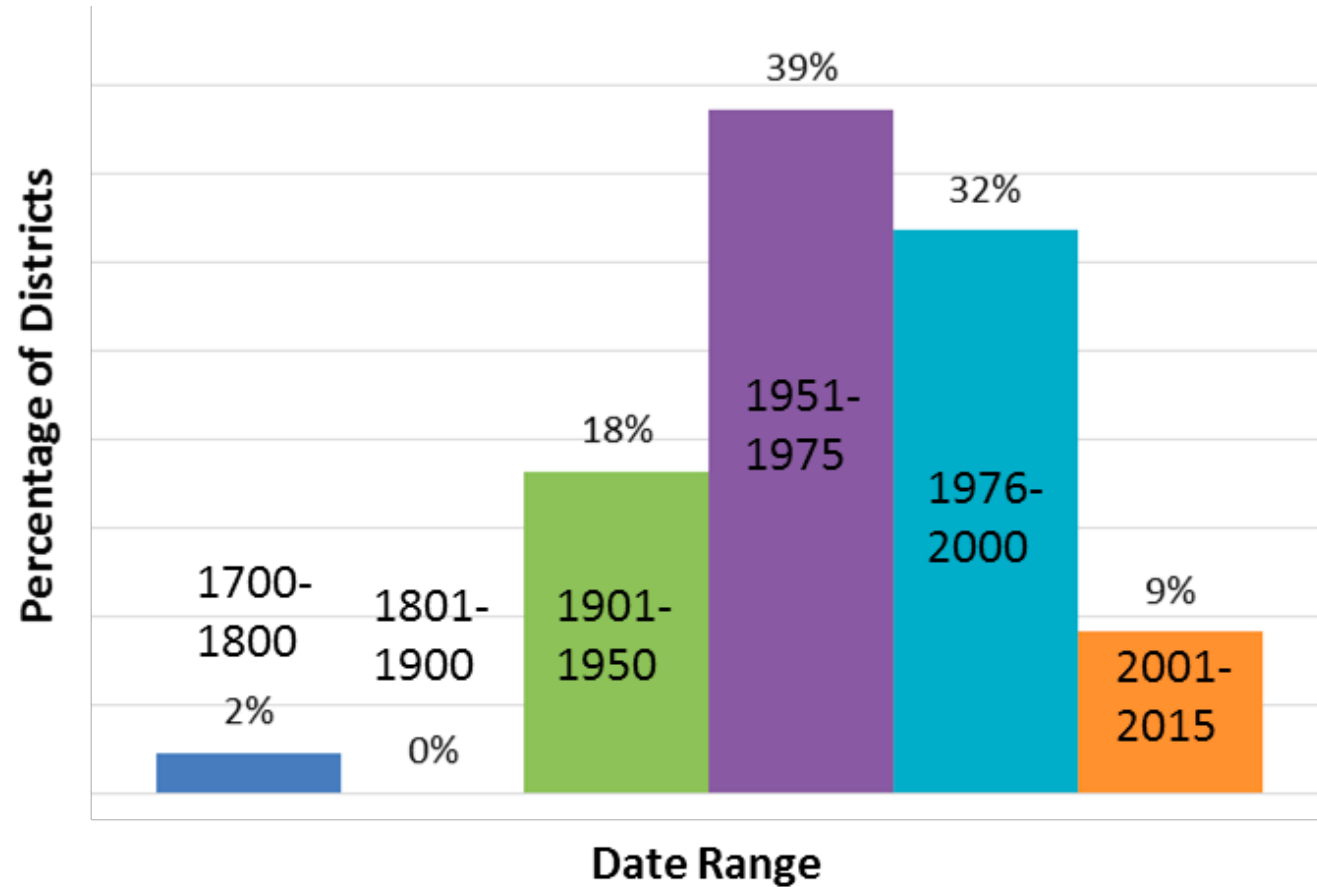
Percentage of Districts that Contain Environmental or Historic Resources

Magisterial District	Contain RPA or EQC areas (% of total)	Contain <i>significant</i> historic resources (% of total)	Contain <i>potentially significant</i> historic resources (% of total)	Allow Park Authority Access (% of total)	Total No. of Districts
Dranesville	7 (58%)	4 (33%)	9 (75%)	5 (42%)	12
Hunter Mill	1 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (100%)	1
Mt. Vernon	4 (80%)	1 (20%)	1 (20%)	4 (80%)	5
Springfield	18 (86%)	2 (10%)	9 (43%)	7 (33%)	21
Sully	4 (80%)	2 (40%)	1 (20%)	3 (60%)	5
Total	34 (77%)	9 (20%)	19 (45%)	20 (45%)	44

District Ownership

- A significant number of A&F Districts have been in owners' families for many years, and a primary purpose of the program is to enable families to retain farms and open space.
- The following figure shows the date range in which district property was first acquired by the families of the current owners.

Date Range of Ownership – Countywide



Date of First Ownership

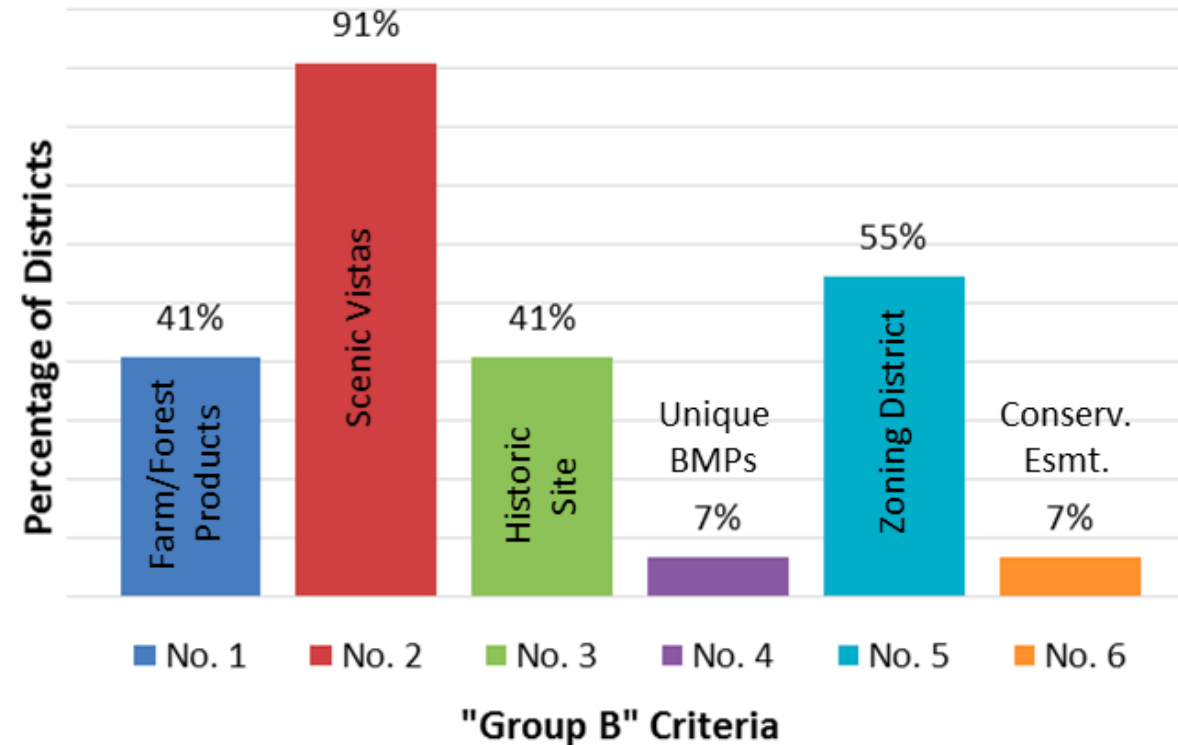
Magisterial District	1700-1800	1801-1900	1901-1950	1951-1975	1976-2000	2001-2015	Total Districts
Dranesville	-	-	3 (25%)	4 (33%)	4 (33%)	1 (8%)	12
Hunter Mill	-	-	-	1 (100%)	-	-	1
Mt. Vernon	-	-	2 (40%)	1 (20%)	1 (20%)	1 (20%)	5
Springfield	1 (5%)	-	3 (14%)	11 (52%)	6 (29%)	-	21
Sully	-	-	-	-	3 (60%)	2 (40%)	5
Total	1 (2%)	-	8 (18%)	17 (39%)	14 (32%)	4 (9%)	44

Local District A&F Evaluation Criteria

- Chapter 115 of the Fairfax County Code contains 16 evaluation criteria to be used as a guide during the review of applications for establishment or renewal of Local Districts.
- The ten “Group A” criteria consist of basic standards which all districts should satisfy (with occasional exceptions).
- “Group B” criteria are six additional elements that a district might satisfy that would further contribute towards the goals and objectives of the A&F program.
- It is recommended that each district satisfy at least two of the following “Group B” criteria:
 - 1) Farm and/or forest products have been regularly produced and sold during past five years.
 - 2) Provides scenic vistas, improves views from roadways, or contributes to rural character of area.
 - 3) Contains significant historic or archaeological site that would be preserved, or a site with high potential for sites that provides access to the County to survey.
 - 4) Farming or forestry practices unique or particularly effective water pollution control measures.
 - 5) Zoned R-A, R-P, or R-C.
 - 6) Land is entirely in permanent open space easement

Local Districts satisfying each of the “Group B” criteria

Criteria:	No. 1	No. 2	No. 3	No. 4	No. 5	No. 6
Number of Districts:	18 (41%)	40 (91%)	18 (41%)	3 (7%)	24 (55%)	3 (7%)



“Group B” Criteria Chart Summary

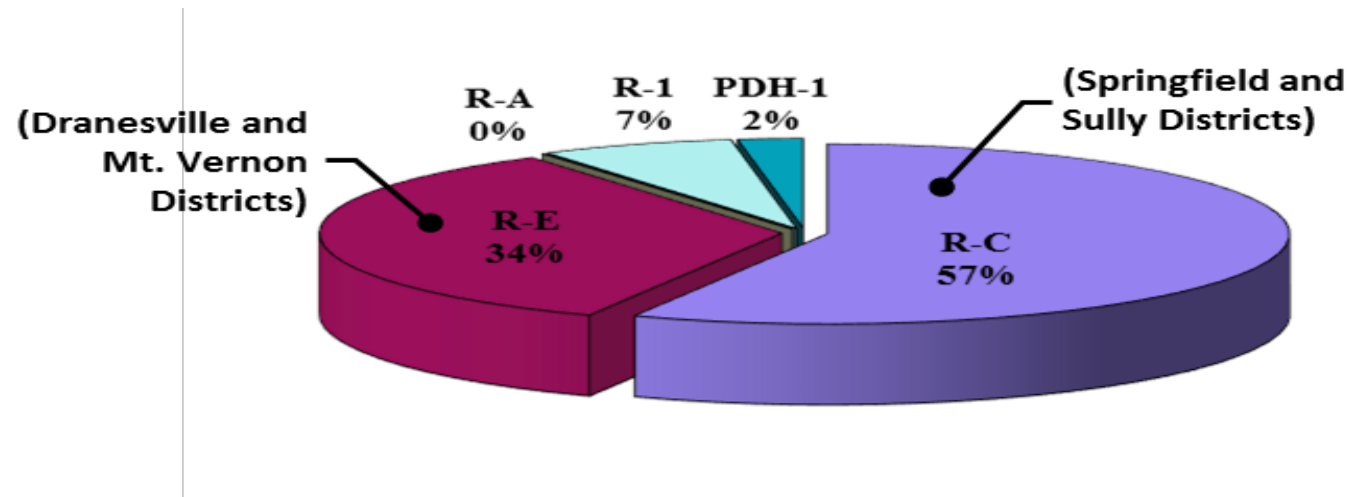
- The Figures above show that all Local Districts (100%) provide scenic vistas and contribute to the rural character of the County, but only 41% of Districts regularly produce farm and/or forest products for sale.
- A significant number of Districts (41%) either contain a significant historic or archaeological site that is being preserved, or have a high potential to contain such sites.
- Very few Districts are entirely protected by conservation easements (7%), or utilize unique or particularly effective water quality measures (also 7%).
- Only 55% of Local Districts are located in the lowest-density Zoning Districts (R-C and R-A), with the remaining 45% of Local Districts located in moderate-density Districts (R-E, R-1 and PDH-1).

Statewide District A&F Evaluation Criteria

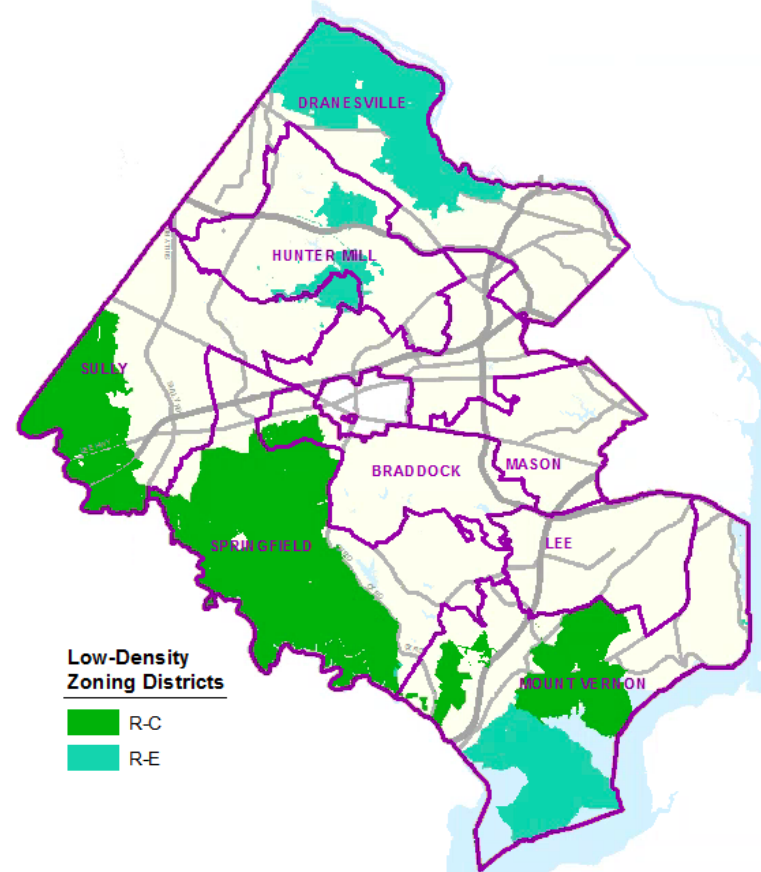
- Chapter 114 of the Fairfax County Code contains 10 evaluation criteria to be used as a guide during the review of applications for establishment or renewal of statewide districts.
- The criteria are nearly identical to the “Group A” criteria for Local Districts, and represent basic standards that all Statewide District should meet.
- The four existing Statewide Districts satisfy all of the applicable evaluation criteria of Chapter 114.

Zoning Districts

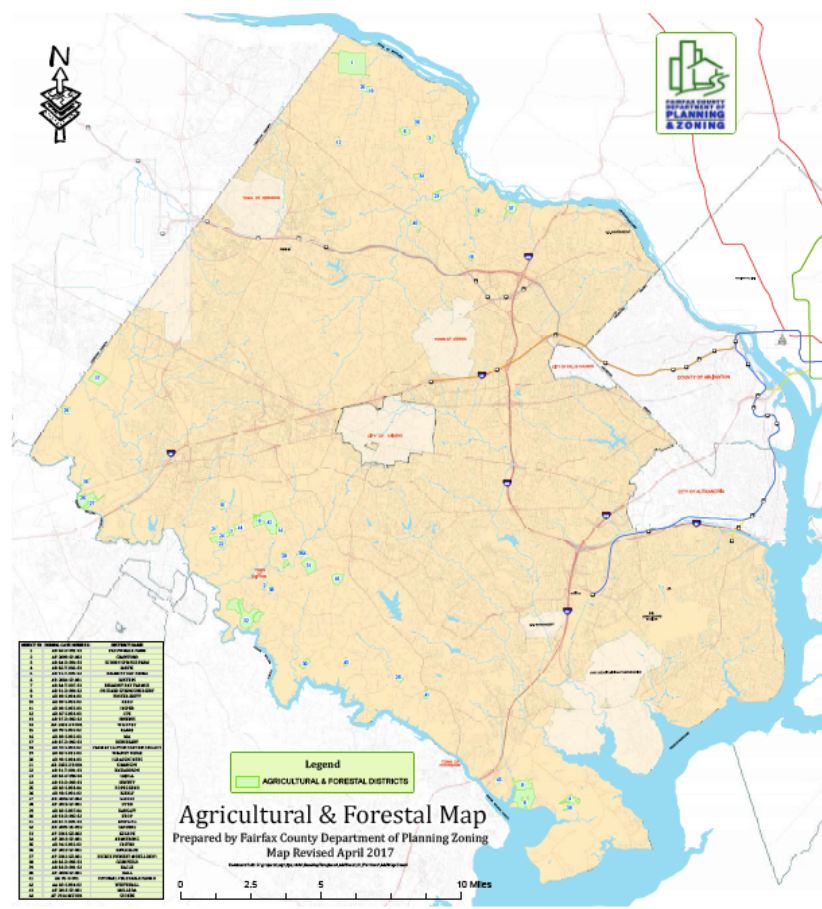
- The pie chart below shows the percentage of all A&F Districts (local and statewide) in each of five Zoning Districts.
- The zoning of A&F Districts is largely dependent on the predominant zoning that exists in various areas of the County.
- For example, R-C Zoning makes up a large portion of the Springfield District, while R-E Zoning is more predominant in the Dranesville and Mt. Vernon Districts.



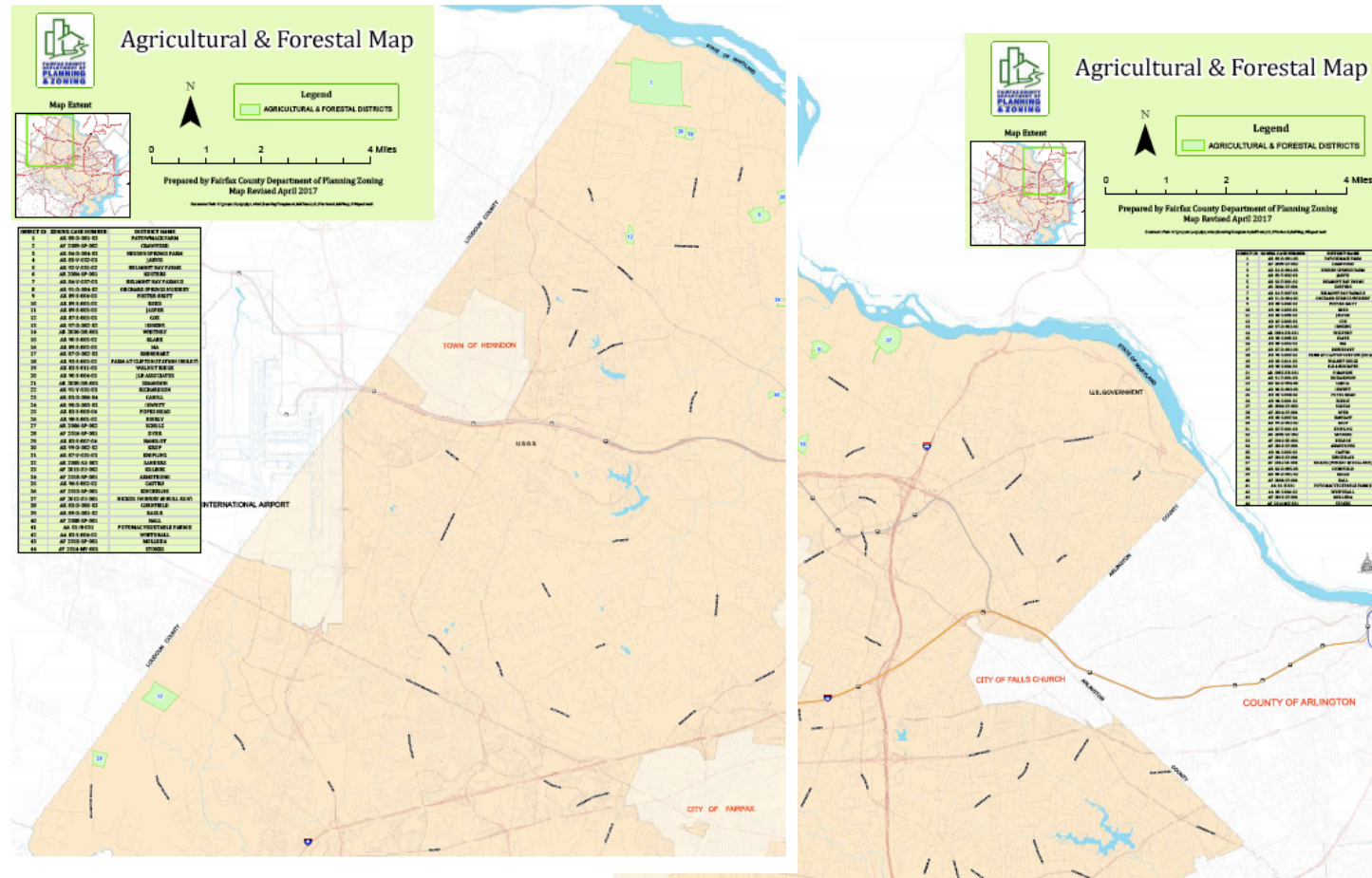
Distribution of Low-Density Zoning Districts



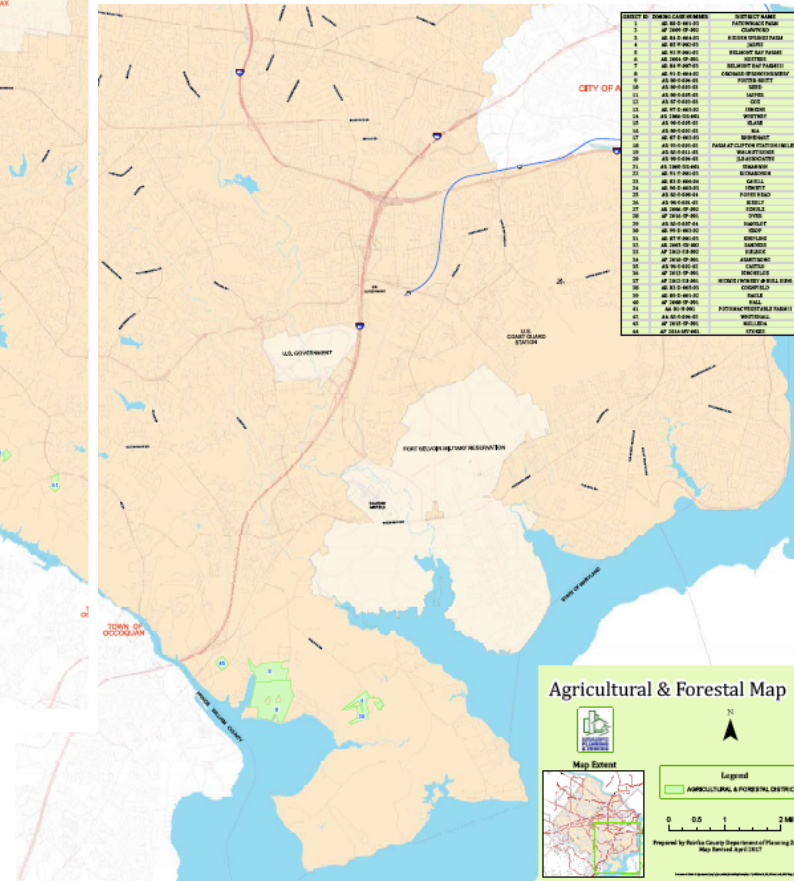
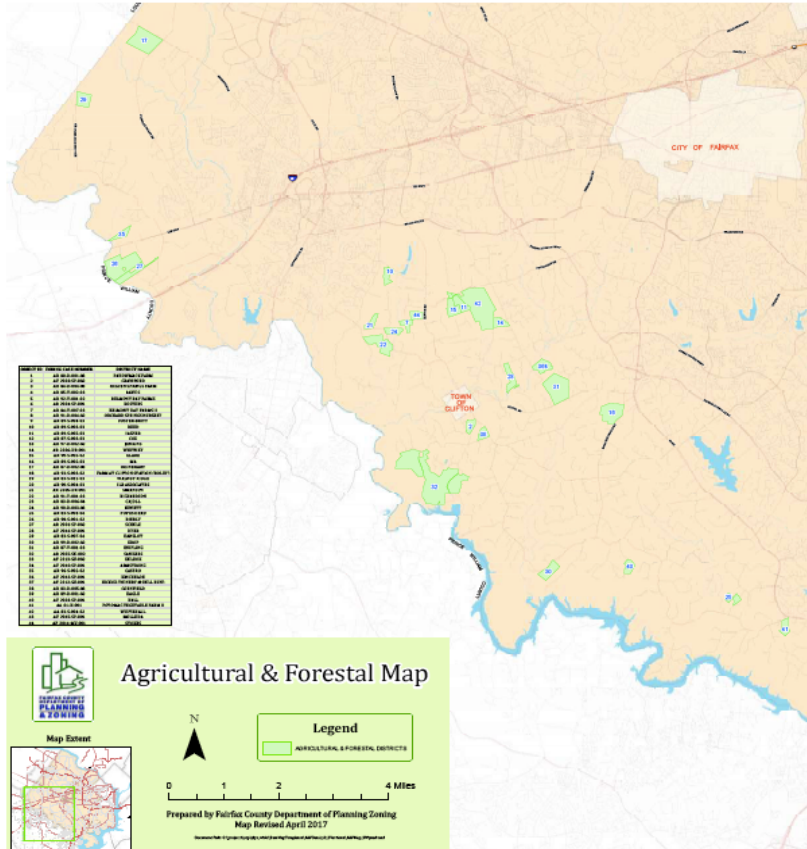
Agricultural & Forestal Map of the County



North County Agricultural & Forestal Map



South County Agricultural & Forestal Map



Questions?

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