

**CHAPTER 5**  
**EXISTING LAND USE INVENTORY**

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### OVERVIEW

An area's development is largely influenced by the ways land is already being used, such as a residence or business, or by simply using the land for farming or leaving it in a natural state. These activities are called "existing land uses." Land uses provide a general description of how the land is being used. Land uses are not based on ownership, zoning, or special designations. When land uses are drawn on a map, the map can be studied to see if a pattern of land uses is developing. For example, similar land uses located together or in a row along a road may indicate a trend which attracts similar land uses to the area. Studying the pattern of land uses can help the county plan for services that would be needed to support the land uses. For example, an increase in residential growth may indicate the need for a new school or recreation facility, while an increase in new commercial or industrial businesses may indicate the need for public water and sewer lines.

In order to determine how Charles City County may develop, it is a good idea to first know how the land use patterns are developing in the county. The county and Richmond Regional Planning District (RRPDC) staff used the county's 1998 Comprehensive Land Use Plan's Existing Land Use map as the official record of the county's land uses as of May 1998. To update the information, county and RRPDC staff reviewed and recorded new building permit information, and property information maintained in the county's Commissioner of Revenue Office. A countywide drive-by inspection was also conducted to verify the information. In addition to adding new information, land uses that no longer exist were removed from the land use map. It is not uncommon for land uses to change gradually over time. In some instances, a land use may seem to change overnight from such events as a fire that destroys a building, a change in ownership of a property, or when a business opens or closes.

**EXISTING LAND USES**

The total area of the county is about 204 square miles or about 130,560 acres. The total land area of the county is 184 square miles or about 117,760 acres. Of the land area, most of it, 80 percent, is used for agricultural or forestry purposes or is left in a natural state. The remainder of the county is developed with residential, commercial, industrial and public/semi-public uses. Development in Charles City County is usually either clustered around road intersections or found in isolated locations along state maintained roads or along the Chickahominy River or James River.

The majority of the county’s commercial and industrial development is located in the western half of the county. The eastern half of the county is predominantly used for forestry operations. The county’s country stores and gas stations are typically located at cross-roads while bed and breakfast inns are primarily spread along historic Route 5 near the James River.

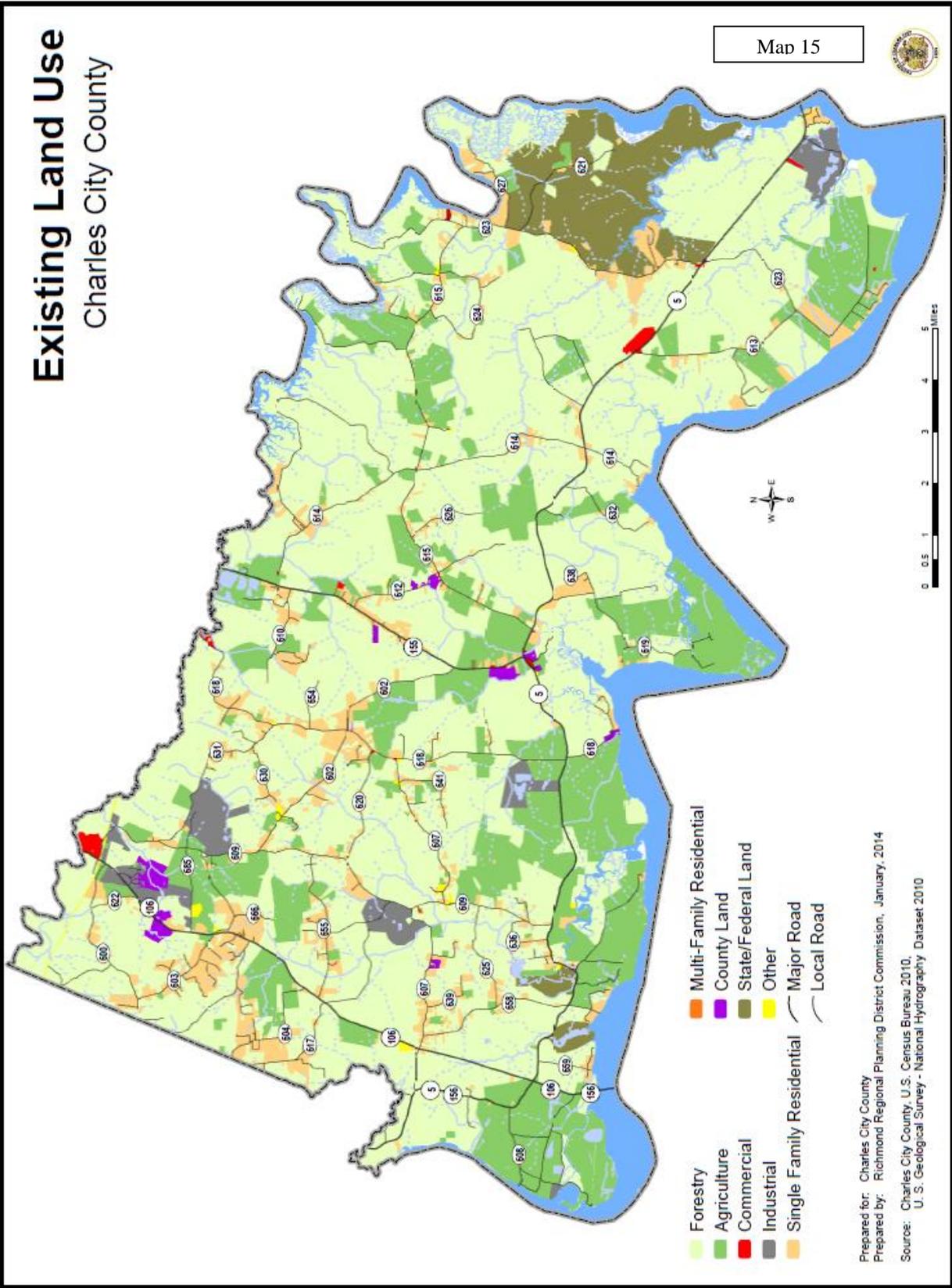
A description of the county’s existing land use classifications follows. **Table 22** provides a summary of the county’s existing land use classifications. **Map 15** shows the county’s existing land use pattern.

**TABLE 22**

<b>Charles City County Existing Land Use Classifications</b>		
<b>Land Use Classifications</b>	<b>General, Working Definition</b>	<b>General Corresponding Zoning Districts</b>
<b>Agriculture</b>	Farming operations including pasture lands.	A-1, A-20
<b>Forest</b>	Active and passive forestry harvesting operations and land in naturally woody state.	A-1, A-20
<b>Roadside Residential*</b>	Typically one acre or larger tracts located along roadways, waterways or near road intersections.	A-1
<b>Neighborhood Residential*</b>	Typically one acre lots served by an internal road system.	A-1
<b>Commercial</b>	Country stores, gas stations, antique shops, automotive shops, greenhouses, marinas, banks.	B-1, P-1, A-1
<b>Historic Commercial</b>	Bed and breakfast establishments, plantations and related businesses.	A-1
<b>Light Industrial</b>	Manufacturing and trucking operations.	M-1 CUP, PDIP-CUP
<b>Heavy Industrial</b>	Sand and gravel operations, ports and county landfill.	A-1 CUP, M-2, B1-C.
<b>Public/Semi-Public</b>	Local, State and Federal government buildings, fire stations, transfer stations, schools, churches, recreation facilities and wildlife facilities.	Respective Underlying Zoning Districts

\*Includes Home Occupations

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### **AGRICULTURE**

Agricultural land uses include land used for farming or pasture land. According to the 2007 Census of Agriculture, County Data, agricultural land use accounts for 27,489 acres (about 24 percent) of the county's total land area. Tracts of agricultural land are located throughout the county. Agricultural tracts in the southern portion of the county tend to be larger than those found in the northern portion. Rural residential housing is found scattered throughout these areas as with all rural areas with a lot of agricultural land.

Soil surveys indicate that 43,500 acres (37 percent) of the land area in Charles City County is prime agricultural land as defined by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Prime agricultural land is generally defined as soils that are the best suited for producing food, feed, fiber, and oilseed crops — with low erodibility, good drainage and other similar features. A comparison of existing farmland with the location of prime agricultural soils shows that less than half of the areas classified as prime agricultural lands are being used for agricultural purposes. (Note: No new Census of Agriculture has been completed since 2007.)

### **FOREST**

Forest land uses include land used for active or passive forestry harvesting operations or land left in its naturally wooded state. Proper environmental conditions, such as good soils, gently rolling topography, and moderate climate have helped forests to flourish in Charles City County. Rural residential housing is found scattered throughout these areas as is common with many rural areas that have a lot of forest cover.

### **RESIDENTIAL**

As with other forms of land uses, residential development is scattered throughout Charles City County. For purposes of this inventory, residential land uses are divided into two categories – Roadside Residential and Neighborhood Residential.

#### **Roadside Residential**

The county's Roadside Residential housing is located in small clusters at or near road intersections, along primary or secondary roads and along the rivers. This type of housing is usually located on a one- to five- acre lot that has direct driveway access to the roadway. In Charles City County, almost all Roadside Residential housing units are served by individual septic tanks, with the exception of the county's first central sewer system in the Mount Zion-Rustic area. The Mount Zion-Rustic and Wayside areas are served by public water systems. All other Roadside Residential housing in the county is served by individual water wells.

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### **Neighborhood Residential**

There are numerous areas within the county that are classified as Neighborhood Residential. Examples of this type of development includes Glendale Acres, located on Warriner Road (Route 604); Sterling Heights, located on Courthouse Road (Route 155) near Providence Forge; Harrison Point, located on Roxbury Road (Route 106); and Ferry Farm Subdivision, located on Chickahominy Bluff Road (Route 645) near the Charles City-James City County line. These and other areas are classified Neighborhood Residential due to their development pattern. For example, lot sizes are uniform – averaging an acre – and houses are clustered around a local street instead of having direct access to a major road. Two areas have private water systems. The remaining areas are served by individual wells. All housing in this classification is served by septic tanks.

## **COMMERCIAL**

The county's slowly growing commercial base is mainly comprised of small businesses. Approximately 50 commercial uses are in operation. Most of these commercial uses are found widely dispersed throughout the county, while some small clusters of commercial uses exist at road intersections. Small clusters of commercial uses are found at Adkins Store, Ruthville, the Courthouse, and the intersection of Sandy Point Road (Route 613) and John Tyler Memorial Highway (Route 5).

Typical commercial establishments found in the county are country stores, service stations, or a combination of country stores and service stations. Other types of commercial uses include automotive body repair shops, gift or antique stores, florists/greenhouses, and a bank. A small number of service-oriented businesses, such as beauty and barber shops and restaurants, are also found within the county.

There are also many commercial home occupation and home-based business uses that are conducted from the residence, throughout the county as well. Since the county does not have a business license/permit, or another formal method of tracking businesses, it is difficult to truly know the number of commercial businesses occurring within the county. It is important to note, that many of the county's businesses that are located on commercial property once were successful home occupations and home-based businesses that exceeded the capacity of their residential properties.

The county has one marina which is classified as a commercial land use, the Rivers Rest Marina, located on the Chickahominy River in the northeastern part of the county off Willcox Neck Road (Route 623). The marina consists of a boat ramp and docking facility, a convenience store, and a restaurant.

### **HISTORIC COMMERCIAL**

There are eleven plantation and/or bed and breakfast inns located in Charles City County. Most of these businesses are located in older, mainly historically significant homes. Although plantations and bed and breakfast inns typically serve many different functions, the bed and breakfast portion of the business is considered a commercial land use. The county's plantations and bed and breakfast establishments are typically a combination of homes for county residents, tourist attractions, and small businesses. The level of tourist and commercial activity is controlled by the individual property owner. Most of the plantations and related historic commercial activities are found along John Tyler Memorial Highway (Route 5).

### **INDUSTRIAL**

Land used for industrial purposes comprises the second largest category of the developed land uses in the county. For purposes of this inventory, industrial uses are divided into two categories – light industrial and heavy industrial.

#### **Light Industrial**

Light industrial land uses in Charles City County include such industries as manufacturing, trucking, and automobile salvage. A substantial portion of the county's light industrial land uses are located in the northwest corner of the county. The county's largest concentration of light industrial land uses is located in the Roxbury Industrial Center. The Center, located adjacent to Roxbury Road (Route 106), contains approximately 272 acres and has full utility service and access to highway transportation.

The remaining light industrial uses are located throughout the county. These industries tend to be small in size and employ only a few people. These uses are principally related to trucking or automobile salvage.

#### **Heavy Industrial**

Heavy industrial land uses in Charles City County include such industries as sand and gravel mining, ports, tire recycling and the county's landfill. The county contains large deposits of sand and gravel. Several sand and gravel operations are currently mining in the county. A majority of these operations are located south of John Tyler Memorial Highway (Route 5).

The county's ports are located on the James River. They consist of two barge ports and are found at the sand and gravel operations near Eppes Island and at Sandy Point. Port Tobacco at Weanack, at Shirley Plantation, is utilized specifically for transporting raw materials (gravel, sand and dredge spoils) up and down the James River.

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The county's landfill, located in the northwest portion of the county, is operated by Waste Management, Inc. The landfill is approximately 1,100 acres and has an expected life of 35 years, depending on tonnage per month and year agreements.

### **PUBLIC/SEMI-PUBLIC**

In Charles City County, public and semi-public uses include federal, state and local government facilities and roads. Approximately 6,000 acres of land are owned, operated, or managed by the Federal, State or County governments in the county. The county's federal facilities include the Harrison Lake National Fish Hatchery and two U.S. Post Offices. State owned facilities include such property as the VDOT maintenance station on Courthouse Road, the Chickahominy State Wildlife Area in eastern Charles City County and the Kittiewan Wildlife Sanctuary on the James River in the south-central part of the county. The Kittiewan Wildlife Sanctuary is closed to the public. A public boat ramp is located within the Chickahominy Wildlife Management Area along Morris Creek.

County facilities include such properties as the County Government/School Board Administration Building (GSAB) on Courthouse Road, the public school complex, old school buildings, fire stations, transfer stations, and recreation facilities. The different types of public/semi-public uses are shown in detail as part of the Community Facilities and Utilities section.

Of special significance to the county is the school complex which was completed in 1993. The school facility replaced all of the county's previous elementary, middle, and high schools. Also significant to the county was the renovation of the county's old middle school into the County Government/School Board Administration Building (GSAB). The GSAB was completed in 1995.



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In 2002 the County Board of Supervisors in collaboration with the Circuit Court Judge began preliminary planning to construct a new judicial building, and preserve the historic Courthouse, and the original Clerk's Office. The judicial building was completed and opened April 2005.



Roads compose 1,015 acres of land area in Charles City County. Primary roads account for 316 acres of land, while the remaining 699 acres make up the county's secondary road network. A detailed discussion of the county's roads and transportation network is found in the Transportation Network section.

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