

Frequently Asked Questions

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1. What would it mean to have a rural enclave designation?

- A Rural Enclave designation is a land-use policy designed to protect the rural character of a specific area.
- This designation can impose restrictions on development patterns to preserve open spaces, support agricultural uses, and maintain a low-density lifestyle. These restrictions may override existing zoning and Future Land Use (FLU) regulations or may be accompanied by a change in Future Land Use designation.
- The Rural Enclave designation may include lot size restrictions, density caps, limitations on infrastructure expansion, and a focus on environmental preservation.

2. What is the relationship between lot size and density?

- Density refers to the number of dwelling units allowed per acre of land. A higher permitted density will typically result in smaller lots.
- Each Future Land Use category in the County has a maximum allowable density. Minimum lot sizes are governed by zoning.
- For example: A 3-acre lot with a maximum density of 4 dwelling units per acre ($3 \text{ acres} \times 4 \text{ units per acre} = 12 \text{ units}$), but a minimum lot size of 1 acre could only support 3 units ($3 \text{ acres} / 1\text{-acre minimum lot size} = 3 \text{ units}$) unless the landowner requests and is granted a zoning change.
- For subdivision development some acreage is devoted to infrastructure including stormwater ponds, parks, and roads. This infrastructure also counts towards density calculations meaning lots may be smaller. The lots may also vary in size.
- For example: A 10-acre parcel has a maximum density of 1 unit per acre and is subdivided to create 10 new home lots. 35% of the parcel is devoted to infrastructure leaving 6.5 acres for individual home lots. Lots would average 0.65 acres. Some individual lots may be smaller or larger than .65 acres.

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3. What are buildable acres?

- Buildable acres refer to the portion of a lot that is suitable for development. This excludes areas such as wetlands, floodplains, bodies of water, and other protected or non-developable land.
- All acreage calculations in this survey, refer to buildable acres. The buildable acreage of your property may be less than the acreage listed on your deed or the property appraiser's records.
- Density calculations and minimum lot sizes for new developments and lot splits are based only on the buildable acreage. For example: If a 10-acre lot includes 4 acres of wetlands, only the remaining 6 acres (uplands) are considered buildable.

4. What are "Dark Sky" standards?

- "Dark Sky" standards minimize light pollution by requiring downward-facing fixtures and limited brightness levels. They may also require warmer tones of light to mimic natural light sources.
- "Dark Sky" programs are intended to protect wildlife whose natural patterns can be disrupted by artificial light, improve conditions for star-gazing, and reduce potential negative impacts to humans from excess nighttime light.
- See also <https://darksky.org/>

5. How does the county currently regulate fences in Rural Areas?

- The county currently requires that fences located in the front setback of properties with A-1 zoning or a rural Future Land Use designation are "split rail" style to be consistent with the County's goal to maintain rural character. Chicken wire may be added to control pets, farm animals, or wildlife.
- Privacy fences or other types of fencing are permitted for rear yards and side yards.
- Rural Enclave standards could require that new development adjacent to the boundary of the Enclave maintain rural fencing even if the development increases to suburban densities and lot sizes.