

Land Use Subcommittee Meeting
Meeting #2 – 04-18-2026
Meeting Notes

Attendees:

- Robert Richardson
- Doug Cloud
- Gene Griffith
- John Reid
- Maria Hanson
- Jon Neiditz
- Laurie Searle
- Johnathan Cunningham
- Tessa Cunningham
- Paul Gibson
- Lisa Gibson
- Dawn Scarbrough
- Tom Swanson
- Allison Duncan
- Will Duncan
- Tim Southard
- Melea Brett

The Land Use subcommittee met for the second time on Saturday, April 18, 2026 from 11:00am – 12:00pm at City Hall. The group participated in a facilitation discussion on key land use topics, including the Future Development Map, the 20-acre-rule and the City's Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) program.

Notes from the meeting follow, with overall takeaways summarized at the end.

1. Future Development Map

- There was broad agreement among participants that the map reflects historic intent rather than current realities, leaving residents unclear about what land has been committed to development and what land is intended for future development and conservation.
- Some participants expressed concern that current policies may be leading to fragmented, "confetti" open space rather than large, contiguous areas.
- Farmettes within Hamlets were noted as having the potential to evolve into large-lot, estate-style development.

- Participants discussed whether hamlet development should be discouraged in potential agricultural or conservation areas, or whether current allowances are too broad and unclear on the map. The map should be clear about what is truly intended to remain agricultural and rural residential.
- Some participants noted that the hatched area around South Fulton Parkway (Preferred Village Development) should be removed or reduced in size, as development has already been pledged to at least one village or elsewhere within the city.
- Some participants raised questions about the future of the Preferred Village Development. The original intention was to concentrate development along the South Fulton Parkway corridor to lessen the burden on the city as they don't maintain the roadway.
- Some participants noted they would like to see the existing scenic byways communicated on the map.
- The importance of contiguous scenic areas and protected viewsheds was emphasized, particularly along designated corridors.
- Some participants raised concerns about the lack of clear guidance on scenic buffers, viewsheds, and what qualifies as a scenic byway.
- Ongoing questions remain about whether scenic value is defined primarily by views from the roadway or by scenery embedded within the broader community.
- Questions were raised about whether allowing villages in certain locations (e.g., along Cochran Mill Road, a scenic byway) may dilute the scenic nature of the scenic byway.
- Participants discussed whether current development patterns align with the long-term vision for compact, identifiable village centers versus dispersed growth.

2. 20-Acre Rule

- The consultant team and city staff provided a general overview of the 20-acre rule, including its intended purpose.
- The policy applies specifically to subdivision, limiting the ability to divide land into parcels smaller than 20 acres.
- Several participants expressed concerns regarding the current 20-acre minimum lot size requirement, noting there is no clear or accessible explanation of the rule for the general public.
- Participants noted the intention of the rule was to limit traditional subdivision development to maintain the rural character.

- Some participants felt the rule was introduced without sufficient public knowledge.
 - Concerns were raised about fairness and equity of the rule, particularly for landowners who rely on land value as a financial asset rather than traditional retirement options.
 - The consultant team presented a few alternative concepts for development or subdivision of 20-acre parcels. It was noted that the goal would still be to prevent “rural sprawl”. Possible alternatives presented included additional homes or lots for family members, for senior or workforce housing, or for additional preserved open space or agricultural use.
 - The group discussion included consideration of alternative approaches, such as emphasizing road frontage and visual impact over lot size alone, as well as balancing scenic corridor protection with buffering between adjacent properties.
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3. Transfer of Development Rights (TDR)

- Mortgage requirements often prevent landowners from selling development rights.
 - Participants noted that without a viable TDR market, the 20-acre rule is viewed as more punitive. Improving the TDR system to make it usable for residents would allow them to monetarily benefit from their land.
 - Some participants suggested the City consider using public funds to purchase TDRs, though questions were raised about what funding sources might be available.
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4. Other Notes

- Participants raised concerns about how the City will plan for and fund the cost of providing residential and non-residential services under existing land use patterns.
 - Specific roadway aesthetics were discussed, including a desire to avoid multiple narrow driveways along corridors such as Woodruff Road to Campbellton–Redwine, which were seen as detracting from scenic character.
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Overall Takeaways

- Greater clarity on the Future Development Map related to existing development approvals and entitlements.
- A Future Development Map that reflects current realities as well as more specific future development desires.
- Considerations for scenic character and corridor protection.

- Maintaining the 20-acre rule while considering limited, additional development.
- Consider revisions to the TDR program to make it viable.
- The next Working Group Meeting will continue the discussion on the Future Development Map, the 20-acre rule, and the TDR program.