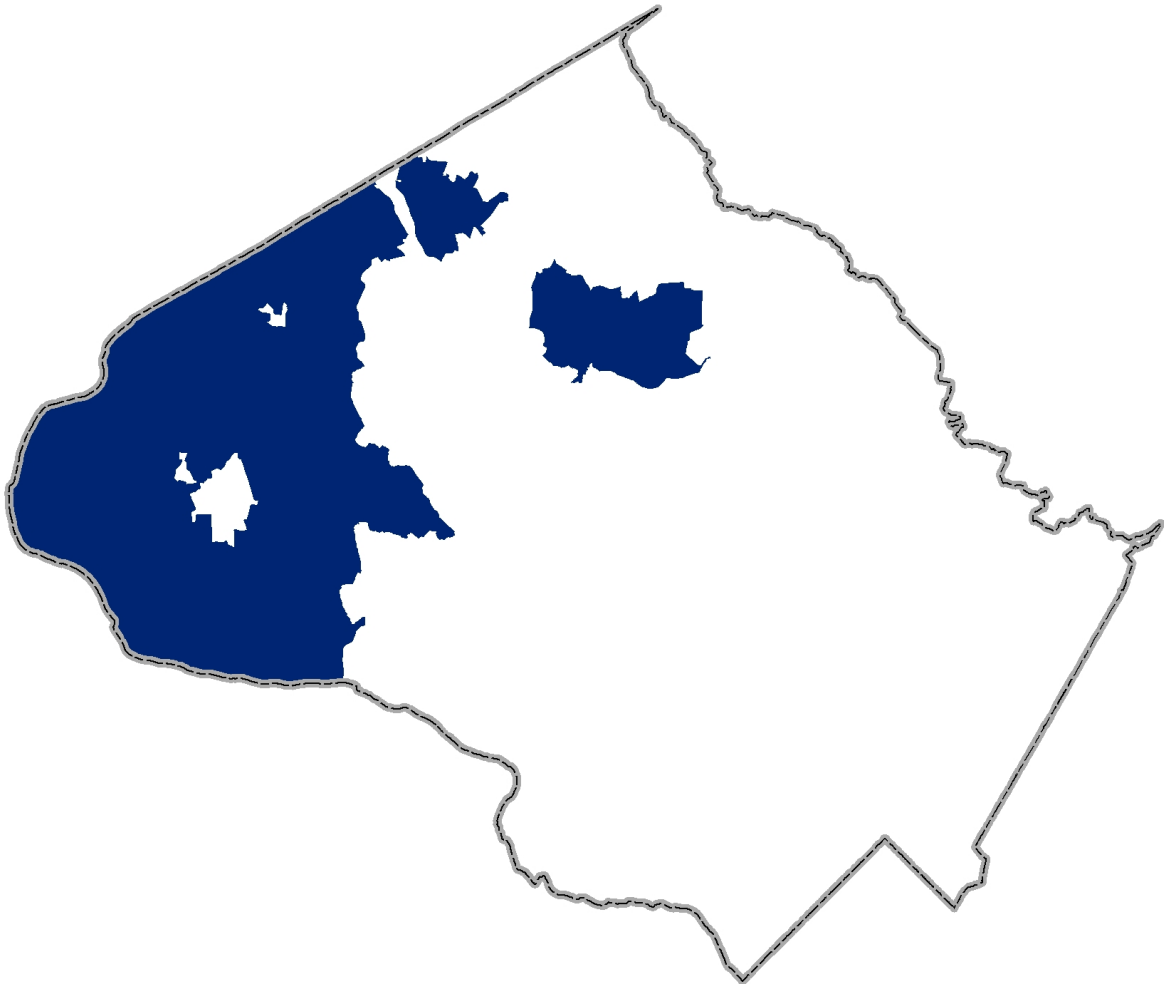


# Master Plan Review

## **PRESERVATION OF AGRICULTURE & RURAL OPEN SPACE**

Approved and Adopted 1980



# BACKGROUND

In 2007, the Montgomery County Council directed the Planning Department to undertake a comprehensive zoning ordinance rewrite. Last rewritten in 1977, the current 1,200 + page code is viewed as antiquated and hard to use with standards that have failed to keep pace with modern development practices.

With only about four percent of land in the County available for greenfield development, the new zoning code can play a crucial role in guiding redevelopment to areas like surface parking lots and strip shopping centers. An updated zoning code is important for achieving the kind of growth Montgomery County policymakers and residents want.

Initial sections of the new code were drafted by Code Studio, a zoning consultant. These drafts were subsequently analyzed and edited by planners based on feedback from the Zoning Advisory Panel (a citizen panel appointed by the Planning Board to weigh in on the project's direction), county agency representatives, residents and other stakeholders. In September 2012, planning staff began the release of a draft code in sections accompanied by a report highlighting changes from the current code. The staff drafts were reviewed at length by the Planning Board.



The Planning Board held worksessions and public hearings between September of 2012 and May of 2013. On May 2, they transmitted their draft to the County Council. The Planning, Housing and Economic Development Committee held worksessions during the summer and sent the draft to the full Council in December 2013. The full Council held worksessions in January 2014 and is expected to vote on the proposal at the end of February.

## ZONE IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS

An important aspect of the Zoning Rewrite process is the potential simplification of 123 existing zones into about 30 proposed zones. While some of the proposed zones are a direct one-to-one translation of existing zones, others are the result of combining existing zones with similar standards. Additionally, existing zones that are not currently mapped or are no longer used in the County have been eliminated from the proposed code. Through the implementation process, Montgomery County aims to simplify the number of zones, eliminate redundancy, and clarify development standards. A full translation table for all zones can be found in the documents section of our website: [www.zoningmontgomery.org](http://www.zoningmontgomery.org).

## Agricultural, Residential, and Industrial Zone Implementation:

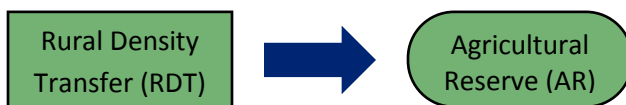
For agricultural and rural zones, the existing zones will be translated to proposed zones on a one-to-one basis, with the exception of the Low Density Rural Cluster zone which is not currently used in the County and will be eliminated.

Many of the existing residential zones will remain the same. Other residential zones will be combined with existing zones that have similar development standards. The R-4Plex zone, which is not currently mapped anywhere in the county, will be removed from the proposed code.

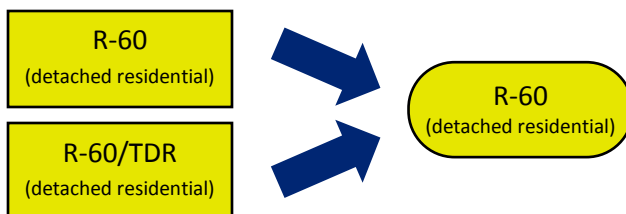
Implementation of Industrial zones will combine similar zones (Rural Service, I-1, and R+D) into the proposed Industrial Moderate (IM) zone. The existing heavy industrial zone (I-2) will be renamed as the Industrial Heavy (IH) zone.

### Examples:

#### Agricultural and Rural



#### Residential



## Commercial and Mixed-Use Zone Implementation:

Parcels located in the existing Commercial, Mixed-use, Central Business District (CBD), and Transit Station zones will be translated into one of the proposed Commercial/Residential (CR) or Employment (E) Zones using a two-tiered process.

First, decisions about specific parcels in these zones were based on recommendations within the Master Plan. Planning staff reviewed each Master Plan in the County. When the Master Plan provided specific recommendations about allowed density, height, or mix of uses for individual commercial or mixed-use parcels, those recommendations were used to build the formula of the proposed zone. This ensures consistency with currently allowed density and height, and helps codify Master Plan recommendations in a parcel-specific manner.

Second, if the Master Plan did not make specific recommendations, the current zone changed to a proposed zone on a one-to-one basis or the proposed zone was determined using a specific standardized decision tree (*see example below*). The standardized decision tree translates existing zones by considering each specific parcel's proximity to single-family neighborhoods or other factors. The goal of the implementation decision tree is to retain currently allowed heights and densities and maintain context sensitivity.

### Example: C-1 Convenience Commercial



# AGRICULTURE AND RURAL OPEN SPACE

## PLAN HIGHLIGHTS

The Preservation of Agriculture and Rural Open Space Functional Master Plan was approved and adopted in 1980. The Plan specifies development and preservation policies, plans, and objectives for the Agricultural Preservation Study Area as well as those development areas also located within the area to be preserved.

### Findings:

- A critical mass of active farmland exists in an area defined as the Agricultural Preservation Study Area.
- Montgomery County's agricultural industry is economically viable and contributes to the regional support of this industry.
- An agricultural and rural open space preservation program is in the public interest.
- A preservation program should be linked to a County-wide growth management strategy.
- Development pressure is threatening and eroding the Agricultural Preservation Study Area.
- Farmland, rural open space, and residential development (rural communities and large lot development) can be compatible land uses within the Agricultural Preservation Study Area, if appropriately located.
- Population centers, defined in the General Plan, such as Clarksburg, Damascus, Olney, and Poolesville are vital elements of the Agricultural Preservation Study Area.
- Land use and zoning recommendations expressed in the Boyds Master Plan, Sandy Spring/Ashton Special Study Plan, and Olney Master Plan are supported by the recommendations made in this plan.



***The Bank Barn***

### Recommendations:

- Preservation of critical masses of farmland and rural open space.
- Identification of an Agricultural Reserve of 110,000 acres and a Rural Open Space Area of 26,000 acres which are the focus of the preservation program.
- Application of incentives and regulations to preserve farmland and rural open space to encourage agricultural use of the land.
- Application of specific innovative preservation techniques such as the Rural Density Transfer Zone, Rural Cluster Zone, and County Development Rights Fund.

# ZONE IMPLEMENTATION

The Preservation of Agriculture and Rural Open Space planning area currently has 11 zones: 3 Rural, 4 Residential, 2 Commercial, and 2 Industrial.

## **Existing Rural:**

RDT: Rural Density Transfer  
R: Rural  
RC: Rural Cluster

## **Existing Residential:**

RE-2: Detached Unit, Single-Family  
R-200: Detached Unit, Single-Family  
R-200/TDR: Detached Unit, Single-Family  
RMH-200: Detached Unit, Single-Family

## **Existing Commercial:**

C-INN: Country Inn  
C-1: Convenience Commercial

## **Existing Industrial**

I-1: Light Industrial  
I-2: Heavy Industrial

## **Standard Implementation:**

The existing RDT zone will be renamed AR (Agricultural Reserve). The existing Rural and RC zones will remain unchanged.

The existing RE-2 zone will remain RE-2 (Residential Estate). The existing R-200, R-200/TDR, and RMH-200 will combine to form the proposed R-200 zone.

All existing C-INN zones will revert to the zoning they had prior to being rezoned into the C-INN zone. In this case, the C-INN zone will revert to the R-200 zone.

The existing C-1 zone will translate to NR (Neighborhood Retail). Each parcel's proximity to detached residential neighborhoods was considered in the decision, with the overall goal to retain currently allowed heights and densities and maintain context sensitivity.

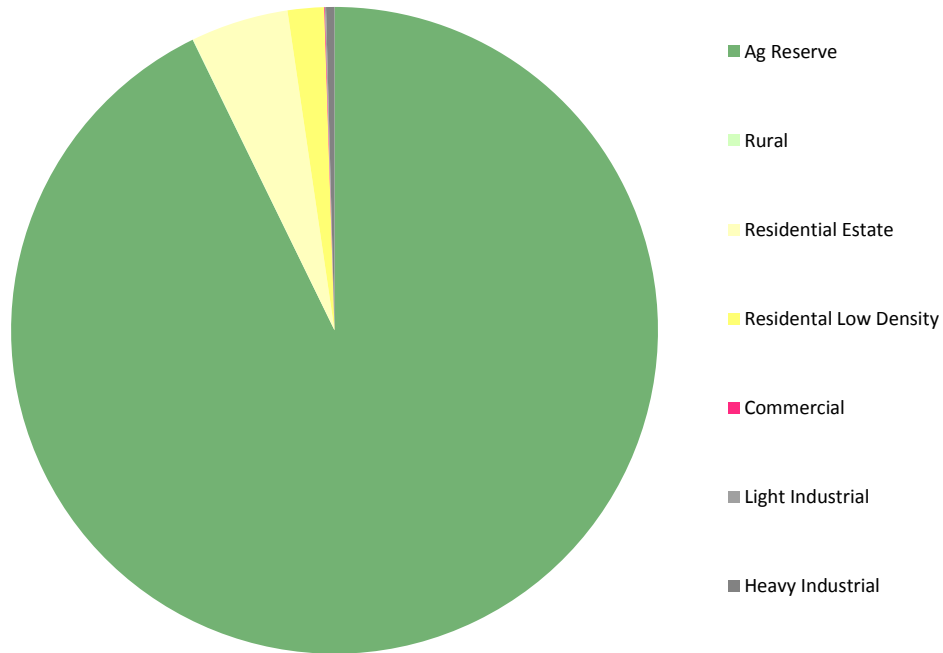
Lastly, the existing I-1 zone will be renamed IM (Industrial Moderate) and the existing I-2 zone will be renamed IH (Industrial Heavy).

# ZONE IMPLEMENTATION

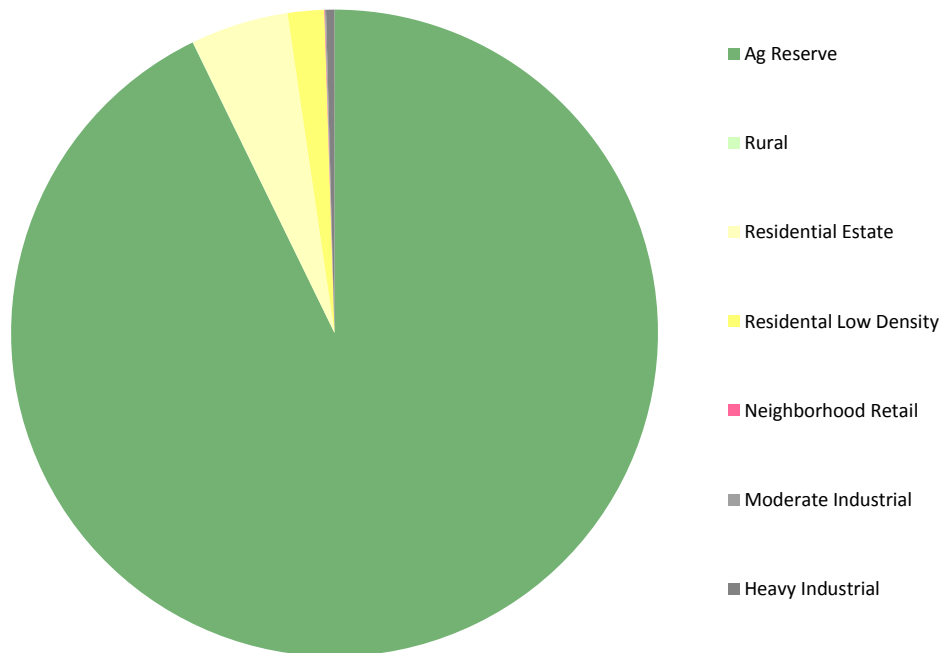
| Preservation of Agriculture and Rural Open Space |                  |         |                    |                  |         |
|--|------------------|---------|--------------------|------------------|---------|
| Existing   |                  |         | Proposed           |                  |         |
| Zone   | Acres            | Percent | Zone               | Acres            | Percent |
| RDT  | 70,972.79        | 92.77   | AR                 | 70,972.79        | 92.77   |
| RURAL  | 7.92             | 0.01    | RURAL              | 7.92             | 0.01    |
| RC   | 8.52             | 0.01    | RC                 | 8.52             | 0.01    |
| RE-2   | 3,731.33         | 4.88    | RE-2               | 3,731.33         | 4.88    |
| R-200  | 1,247.81         | 1.63    | R-200              | 1,396.16         | 1.82    |
| R-200/TDR  | 3.95             | 0.01    |                    |                  |         |
| RMH-200  | 139.15           | 0.18    |                    |                  |         |
| C-INN  | 5.25             | 0.01    |                    |                  |         |
| C-1  | 22.74            | 0.03    | NR-1.0 H-45        | 22.74            | 0.03    |
| I-1  | 42.24            | 0.06    | IM-2.5 H-50        | 42.24            | 0.06    |
| I-2  | 320.82           | 0.42    | IH-2.5 H-70        | 320.82           | 0.42    |
| <b>Grand Total</b>                               | <b>76,502.52</b> |         | <b>Grand Total</b> | <b>76,502.52</b> |         |

# ZONE IMPLEMENTATION

## Ag Reserve: Existing Zoning

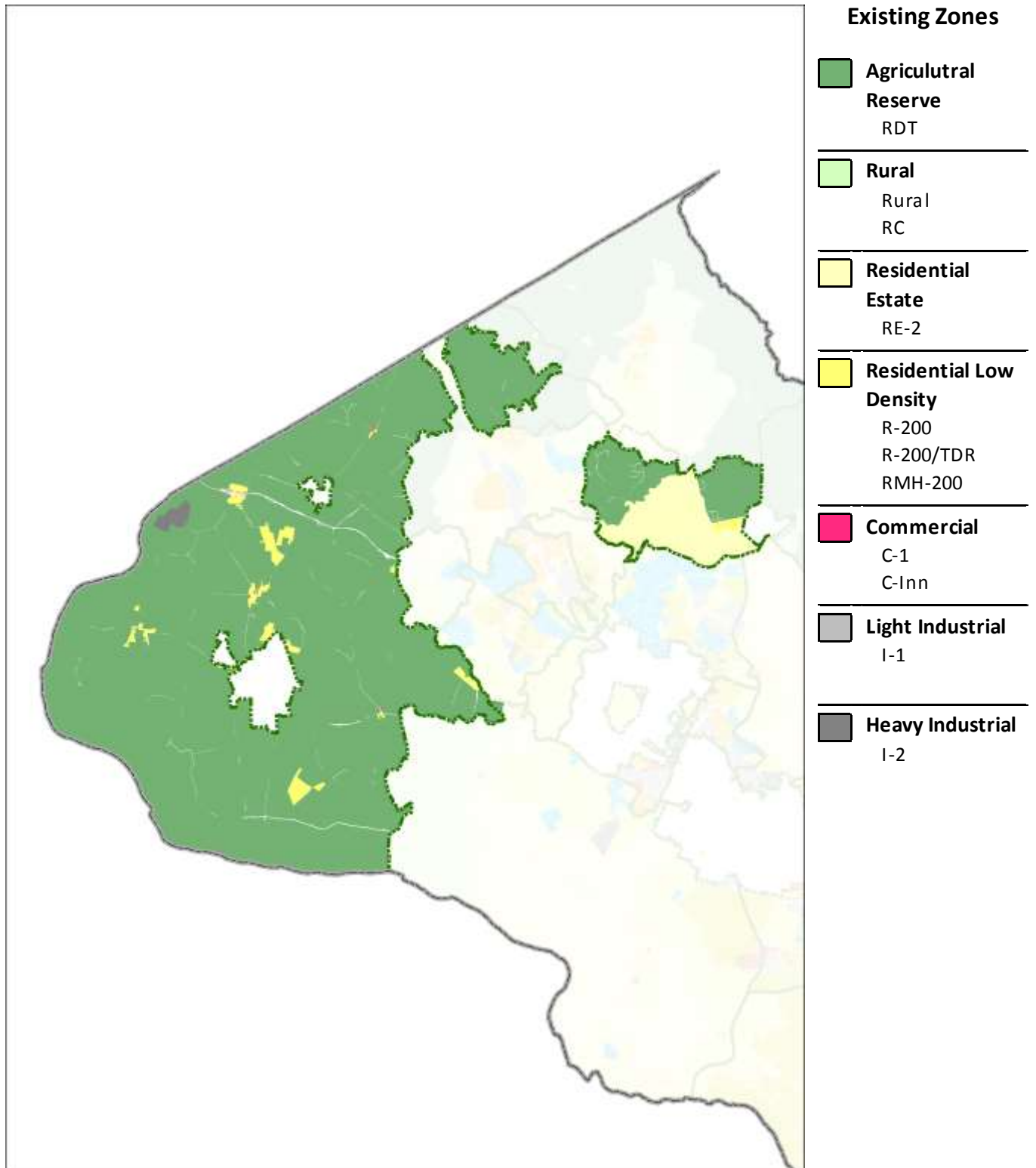


## Ag Reserve: Proposed Zoning












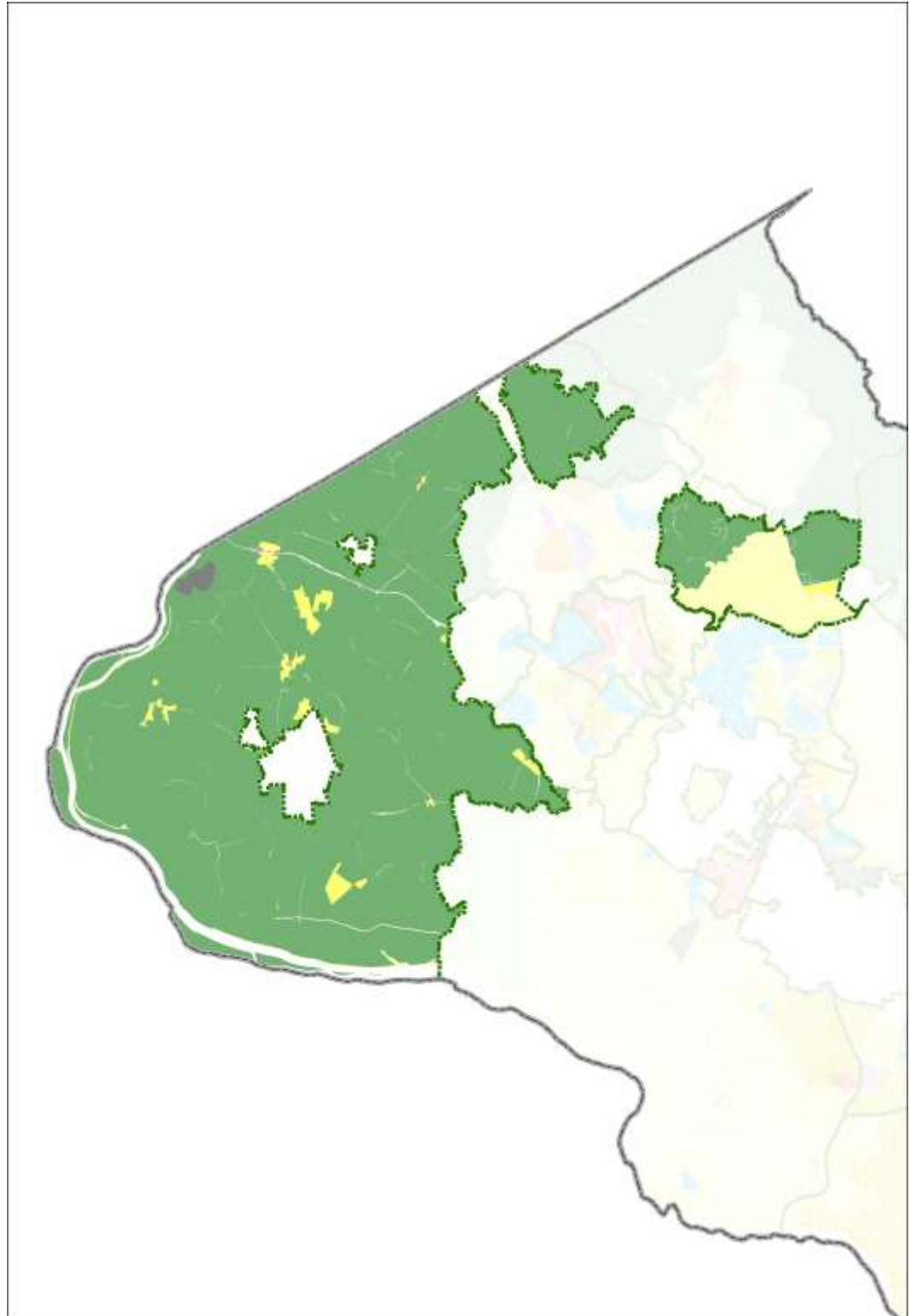
# EXISTING ZONING MAP



# PROPOSED ZONING MAP

## Proposed Zones

|  |   |
|--|---|
|    | <b>Agricultural Reserve</b><br>AR       |
|    | <b>Rural</b><br>Rural<br>RC             |
|    | <b>Residential Estate</b><br>RE-2       |
|    | <b>Residential Low Density</b><br>R-200 |
|    | <b>Neighborhood Retail</b><br>NR        |
|  | <b>Moderate Industrial</b><br>IM        |
|  | <b>Heavy Industrial</b><br>IH           |



## PLANNING AREA CONTEXT

