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QUEEN ANNE'S COUNTY

DESIGN MANUAL

COASTAL ZONE
INFORMATION CENTER

Department of Planning and Zoning
Queen Anne's County
County Office Building
Centreville, Maryland

Queen Anne's County Design Manual

Queen Anne's County Department of Planning and Zoning

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INTRODUCTION

New residents and "natives" of Queen Anne's County have expressed a desire for better control of the physical design and quality of new development. As a result, the County Commissioners and Planning Commission undertook the development of a new long range plan (Comprehensive Plan) and Zoning Ordinance. These documents are intended to achieve a number of objectives which include preservation of agricultural land and related land uses, protection of the County's rural appearance and protection of specific natural resources in Queen Anne's County. Other goals include providing affordable housing, improving roads and highways, and ensuring that new development does not overburden existing public facilities or require radical changes in County fiscal policies.

The new ordinance includes many provisions which permit greater flexibility to landowners and developers. Some of the regulations are complex and require explanation; much of that explanation is best provided through illustrations contained in this publication. This manual is intended to provide:

1. An explanation of the regulations.
2. Examples of development in several of the zoning districts.
3. An explanation of the approval process required for new development.

Queen Anne's County is approaching development regulations differently from many other communities. In recognition of the fact that development pressure is increasing, County officials chose to foster development in an appropriate form rather than barring development or "zoning it out". This approach has led to a series of regulations that require elements such as planted buffers to separate incompatible land uses, open space requirements, and extensive landscaping.

These and other measures in the zoning and subdivision ordinances are intended to ensure that new development does not destroy Queen Anne's County's visual quality and rural environment. The regulations have been designed to establish rules objectively by subjecting each application to a series of simple mathematical computations. The computations determine the number of homes permitted in residential districts, or in instances involving commercial developments, the maximum permitted floor area, the amount of paved and landscaped areas, as well as the amount of landscaping required. Putting the requirements in a format which can be easily interpreted and consistently applied by the reviewing agency eliminates uncertainty and subjective decision making.

This manual is intended to be a guide. It does not contain the entire County Comprehensive Plan or the Zoning Ordinance. If you have a question about the specifics of a given zoning district, you should contact the Planning Office for more information. Each site contemplated for development is different, therefore solutions which appear in this manual may not be applicable to every site regardless of similar zoning. It is a good idea to make an appointment with a member of the planning staff early in the design process to facilitate project approval.

ZONING DISTRICTS

The unincorporated areas of Queen Anne's County have been divided into eleven zoning districts. These districts are designed to aid in the development of community and neighborhood character by allowing only compatible uses in each district. The districts can be viewed in two categories; residential and non-residential. The actual allowed uses within these districts, however, can overlap.

Residential Districts

The largest undeveloped district in the County is the *Agricultural district.* This district is intended to preserve and protect areas of Queen Anne's County that are predominantly in agricultural use and contain prime agricultural soil. This district is designed to protect the agricultural industry from encroaching residential development. Some development is allowed, but only on a very limited scale so that the agricultural character and uses of the area are maintained.

The *Countryside district* serves as a transitional district between the farmlands and more developed areas. It also strictly limits development in coastal and other areas containing resources that require protection. The areas zoned Countryside, when fully developed, will still maintain their rural character.

The *Estate district* is more suburban in character. It is designed to provide a "superior" suburban living environment by providing large estate lots. Lots in this zone are generally larger than two acres.

The *Suburban Estate district* provides for a slightly higher number of homes than do the previous districts; yet it encourages the same type of living environment as the Estate District. This district is intended to be served by a community waste water system. Open space is again a key element in maintaining the overall estate character of the area.

The *Suburban Residential district* is intended to provide for the majority of growth in the areas of Queen Anne's County with sewer service. This district allows moderate density development in a manner that is consistent with the desired suburban character and is intended to provide areas for more affordable housing.

The *Urban Residential district* permits residential development at high densities with an urban character. This district allows apartments, condominiums, and more affordable housing for County residents. These types of development require relatively little land; therefore, landscape standards have been balanced to allow densities of an urban transitional character to be achieved.

Finally, the Queen Anne's County Comprehensive Plan creates a group of zoning districts to maintain the character of neighborhoods and developments already in existence or under construction. They are called *Neighborhood Conservation districts.* They are intended to provide for in-filling of existing neighborhoods while maintaining their character. Future development in these districts will follow the existing densities and lot sizes.

Non-Residential Districts

The *Suburban Commercial district* is designed to provide moderate-intensity commercial development. It is the most restrictive commercial zone and maintains the suburban character of the area by permitting limited volumes of commercial development. Most development in this area is intended to service the needs of nearby residents.

The *Suburban Industrial district* is intended to provide for the development of moderate-intensity office, warehouse, and industrial uses which are compatible with surrounding suburban development. In recognition of the very limited demand for such uses within the County, this district is intended to be used sparingly in order to concentrate such development into small areas which can be readily serviced with necessary infrastructure such as sewer, water, and roads.

The *Urban Commercial district* allows moderate-intensity commercial and light industrial development, yet requires sufficient landscaping to lend a more suburban character to what would otherwise be an urban setting.

Finally, the *Village Center district* is intended to accommodate the crossroad centers where new development or redevelopment is encouraged, but where the design and layout of the proposed new development must be blended into the unique scenic character of the community and surrounding area. Residential and non-residential development can occur in this district. However, most uses in this district require a conditional use approval from the Board of Zoning Appeals.

These eleven land use categories have been designed to foster desirable development in Queen Anne's County without destroying the beauty and character of its neighborhoods. More specific information regarding required landscaping, open space, building size, and setbacks for each district can be found in the Queen Anne's County Zoning Ordinance.

The following sections of this publication provide further guidance for using the Ordinance in developing within these residential and non-residential districts.

RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

Development regulations in Queen Anne's County are subject to mathematical computations designed to ensure that development will occur in a manner consistent with the County's long range objectives. In the case of residential development, the computations determine the number of homes permitted in a district. District character is influenced by density which is the number of units allowable per acre.

This section explains how density is calculated for residential development. Each residential district allows a different density; however, the process used to find this information is similar in each case. The process for calculating residential density is easily accomplished once the components of the process are understood.

Definitions

Base site area - The total area of the site after portions of unusable land are subtracted from the gross area. Areas considered unusable are bufferyards, right of ways, easements, and roads. (See Section 5300 of the Zoning Ordinance.)*

Bufferyard - An area of land together with a specified type and amount of landscaping that may be required between land uses to eliminate or minimize conflicts between them.

Gross density - The quotient of the total number of dwelling units divided by the base site area of the site. It is used in determining site capacity.

Gross site area - The area contained within the boundary lines of a lot.

Net density - An intensity measure expressed as the number of units per net buildable site area. It is the density on the buildable portion of the site. It is also used in figuring the site capacity.

Open space ratio - A ratio of the portion of a site that remains undeveloped (and is specifically designated as open space) to the gross site area. Open space protects natural resources, provides recreational space, and sets the character of an area.

Plant unit - A unit of mixed landscape material specified by the ordinance for use in bufferyards, parking areas, and on-lot landscaping (Sections 6200).

Resource protection land - All land areas consisting of wetlands, drainage ways, woodlands, farm fields, beaches, bluffs, and shore buffers. A percentage of each of these resource areas is protected depending on the type of resource and its location. These percentages are in conformance with the Comprehensive Plan which sets minimum levels of protection for different natural resources.

Shore buffer - A 300 foot strip of land required to be maintained in a natural condition between non-agricultural development and the shores of the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries. The shore buffer extends inland from the edge of the tidal wetland or mean high water line. The buffer must have at least fifty percent of its length and fifty percent of its area covered by vegetation. The exeption is when the depth of the shore buffer occupies more than fifty percent of the upland aea of the site, in which case the Planning Commission will determine a shore buffer of uniform width which will comply as nearly as possible with the standard width but permits reasonable development of the property or properties. (See Section 6100)

Site capacity - A measure of land use intensity measured by the number of dwelling units per acre for an entire site.

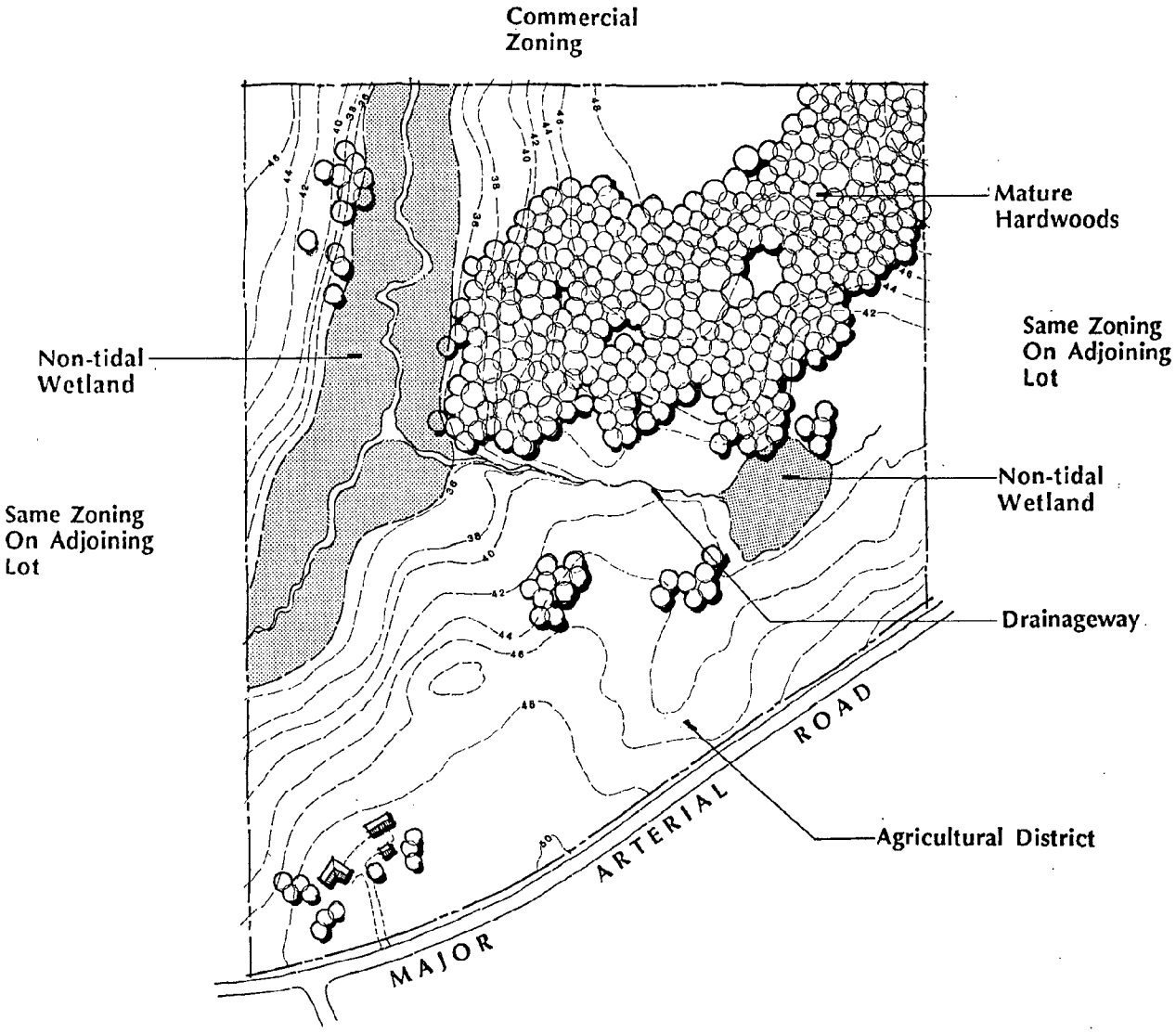
Site Capacity Calculation for Residential Development (Section 5300)

The determination of site capacity can be achieved once a simple site analysis is completed. Natural resources on the site are identified and designated as areas of resource protection. Site capacity can then be calculated.

The following example demonstrates how site analysis and site capacity calculations are achieved using a hypothetical site.

*Note: All sections cited in this publication are from the Queen Anne's County Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations.

Site Analysis for a Residential Site

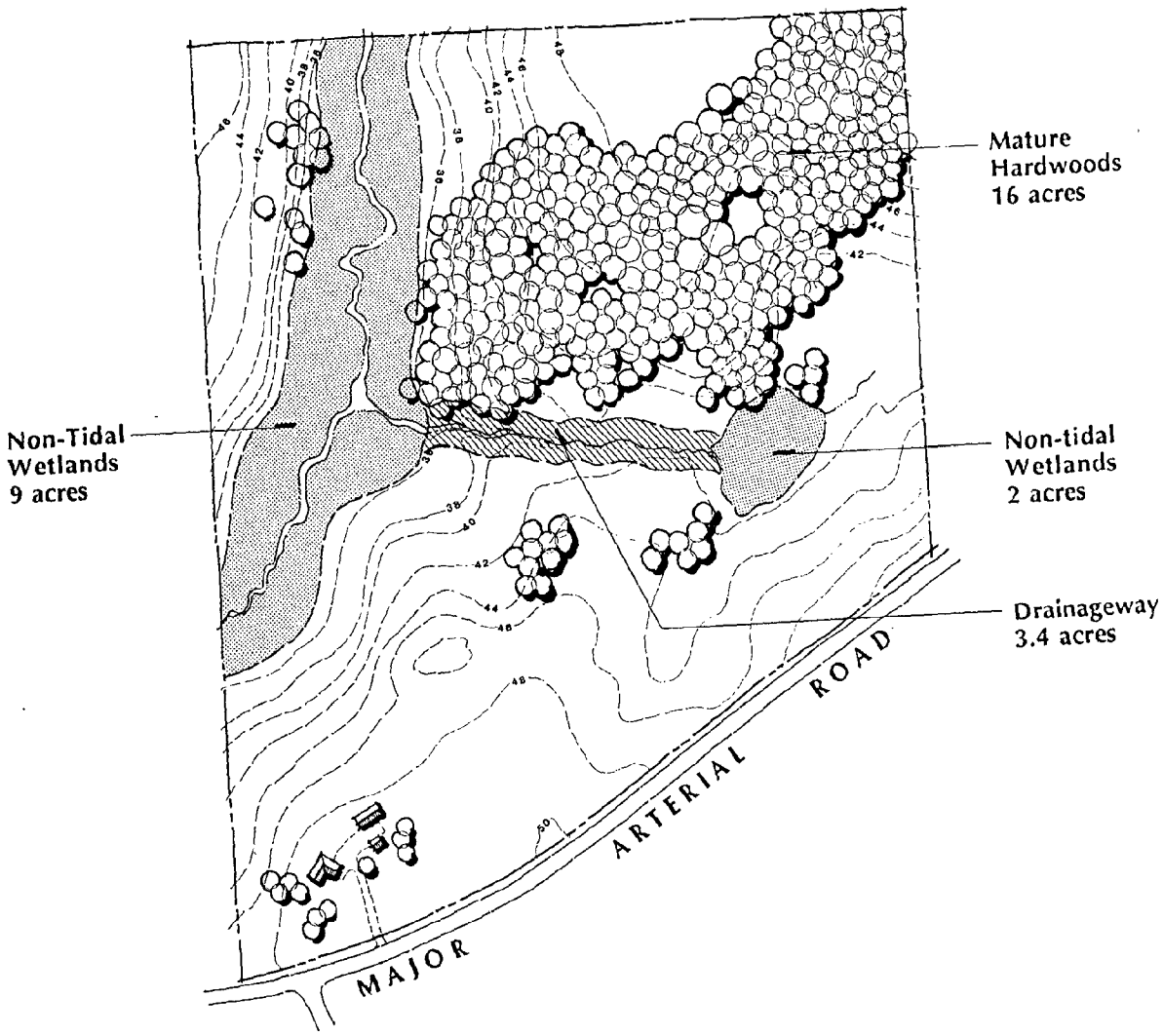


TOTAL SITE AREA 65.4 ACRES

(3) - Natural Resources shown above :
Mature Hardwoods
Non-Tidal Wetlands
Drainage Way

These resources are to be protected
See Page V-26 in Zoning Ordinance.

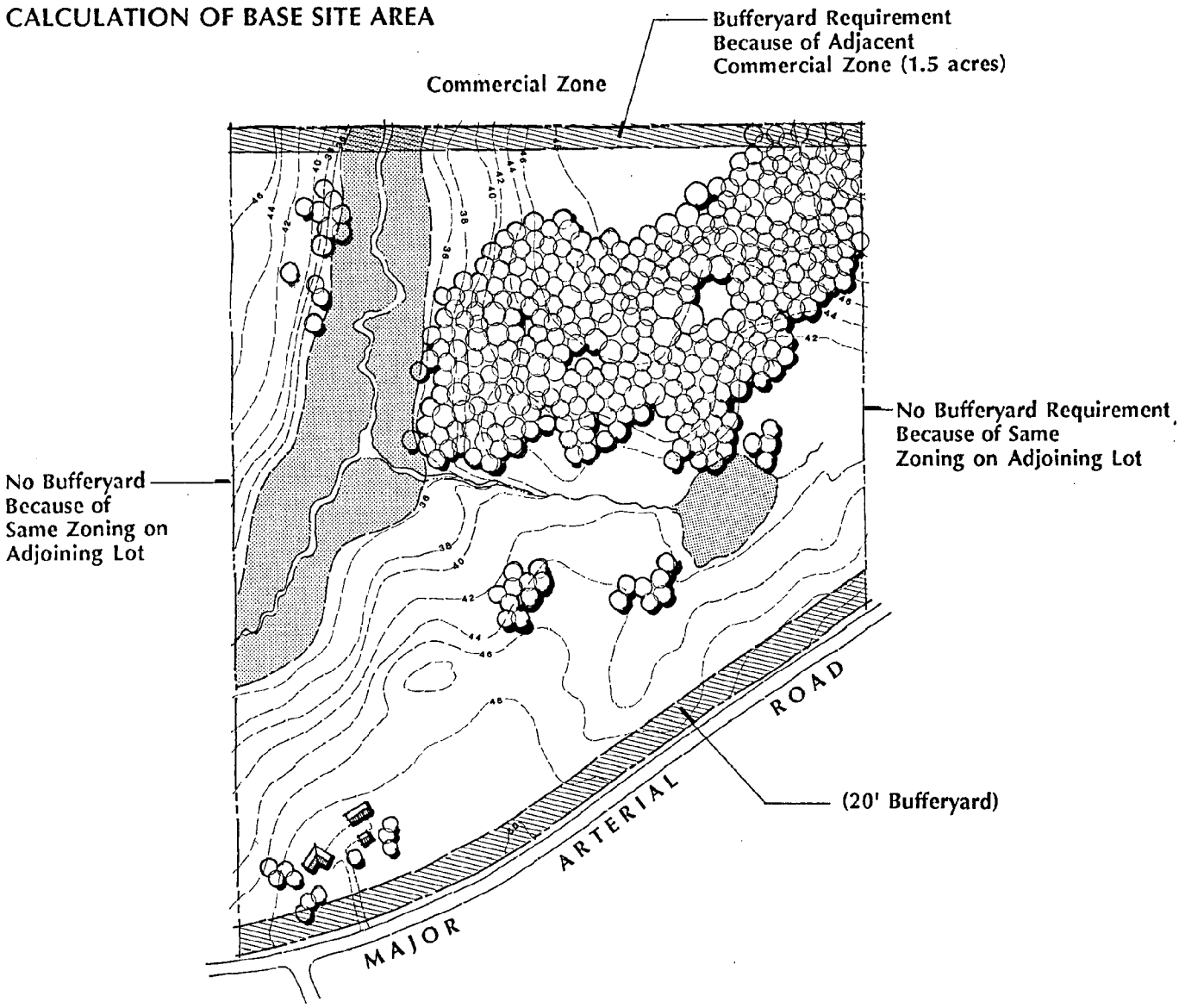
Resource Protection and Special Natural Features Land (Upland Category Shown)



PERCENT OF RESOURCES TO BE PROTECTED *(See Section 5300)*			TOTAL ACRES OF RESOURCES
Mature Hardwoods	70%	11.20 acres	16.0 acres
Non-Tidal Wetlands	100%	11.00 acres	11.0 acres
Drainageway	30%	1.20 acres	3.4 acres
Total Resources to be Protected		23.40 acres	30.4 Total acres
TOTAL SITE AREA		65.40 ACRES	

Site Capacity Calculations

CALCULATION OF BASE SITE AREA



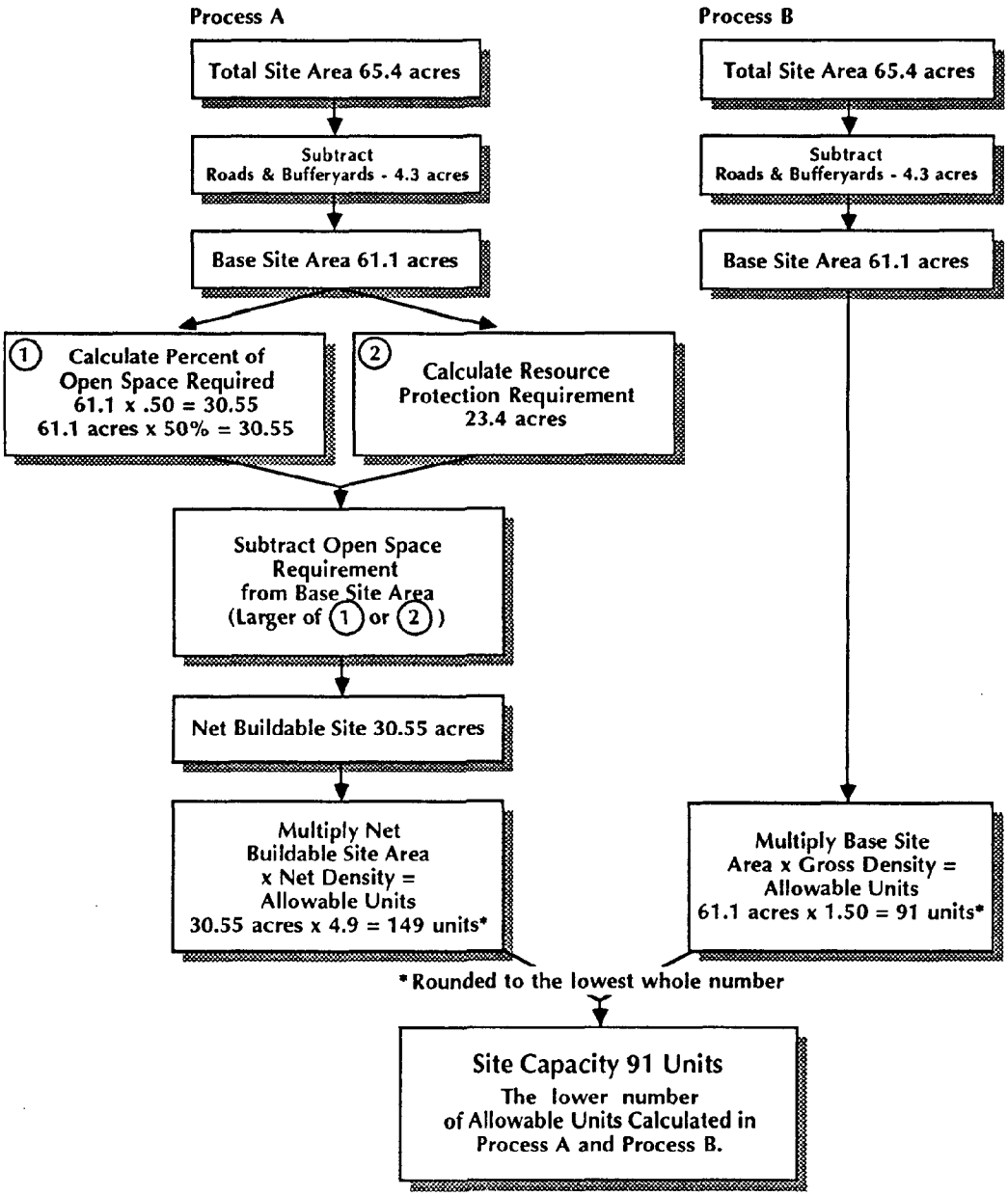
TOTAL SITE AREA	65.4 ACRES
Subtract Appropriate Land (1.5 ac. + 2.8 ac.)	4.3 ACRES
BASE SITE AREA	61.1 ACRES

See Section 5300 for additional information in calculating base site area.

See Section 5300 for additional bufferyard information.
See following diagram for further site capacity calculations.

Procedure for Calculating Site Capacity

RESIDENTIAL



Two different calculations are used in determining site capacity:

- In Process A the natural resources cover more of the site than the minimum development. In instances where natural resources cover more of the site than the minimum required open space, this allowable density figure is used to determine the number of allowable units.
- In Process B the gross site density is used to calculate the allowable density simply by multiplying it by the base site area. This process assumes that natural resources do not exist on the site.

By carrying out these computations, both limiting factors—gross density and natural resources—are addressed and the more limiting of the two is used to determine the site capacity.

The following sections provide actual examples of how these calculations are applied to real sites for three different residential districts, demonstrating good design techniques. Number of units alone cannot insure good design. There must be room in planning for creative solutions so that the aesthetic quality of the environment can be preserved. The Zoning Ordinance is designed to encourage good design and flexibility within the regulations established by Queen Anne's County.

The three examples show how maximum development can be achieved with quality design and maintaining a desirable environment. The districts shown are Countryside, Agricultural, and Suburban Residential. Each example gives an introduction to the district, a description of the site, a summary of the site capacity calculations, and an explanation of the design intent.

RESIDENTIAL DENSITY COMPUTATIONS

EXAMPLE I: COUNTRYSIDE DISTRICT

Introduction

The Countryside district is intended to achieve two purposes. The first purpose is the preservation of sensitive natural features present on the site such as woodlands and wetlands. The second purpose is the preservation of the rural character of designated areas within this district even after their development is complete. This district is intended to provide for a transition between the more intense uses permitted in some zoning districts and the County's agricultural uses.

In terms of its geographic extent, the Countryside (CS) zone is second only to the area covered by the Agricultural zoning district in Queen Anne's County. It is most prevalent along the County's undeveloped waterfronts in the Fourth and Fifth election districts as well as the upper reaches of the Chester River. The CS district is also intended to function as the Resource Conservation Area required by the Chesapeake Bay Critical Area Criteria.

Site Description

A site which is presently zoned CS is illustrated on page 9. The site consists of approximately 170.70 acres.

It is especially important to note the presence of several natural resources. The site has approximately two thousand (2,000) feet of shore line. In this instance, the shoreline poses several challenges to development. The shoreline provides an opportunity for extraordinary views across bodies of open water. While these views provide one of the major attractions to Queen Anne's County, homes located along shorelines have contributed to a decline in water quality as well as a loss of shoreline habitat for wildlife. This is caused by poor site planning and insensitive designs.

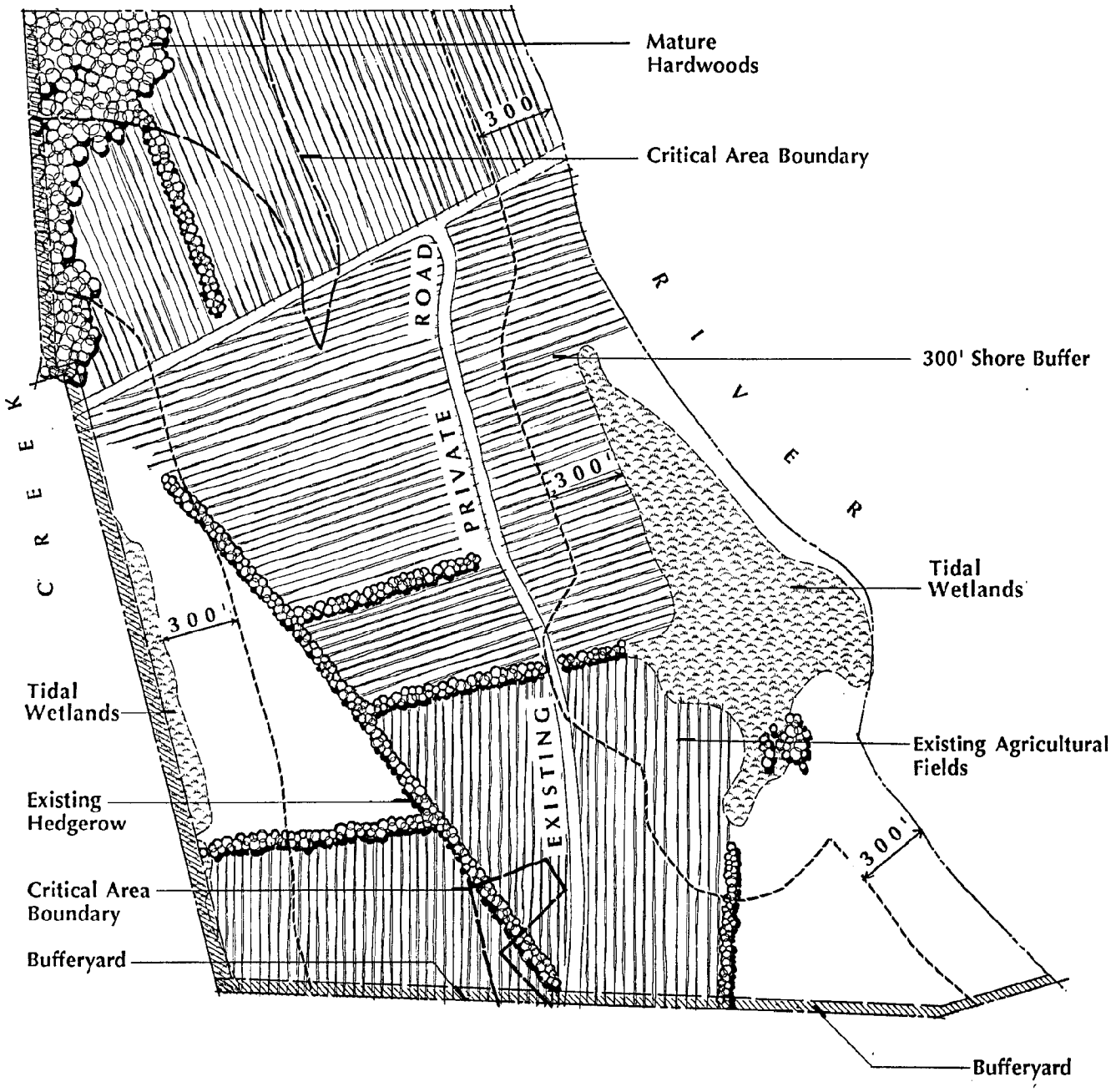
Another important resource on the site is the 3.16 acres of woodland which provide habitat for many species of wildlife. From scientific data determining the impacts of various land uses on water quality, it is now an accepted fact that forest cover serves several functions along a waterfront if wide enough and sufficiently covered by trees. These beneficial functions include the reduction of sedimentation, decreasing the phosphorus and nitrogen contamination from runoff, and the provision of wildlife habitat.

As a result of these findings, Queen Anne's County has determined that an area three hundred (300) feet landward of the edge of wetlands or the edge of the shoreline is not to be developed in any manner except for such uses as passive recreation (arboretums, areas for hiking, nature areas, wildlife sanctuaries, etc. See Section 4007). Furthermore, this area (referred to in the Ordinance and Plan as the shore buffer) must also be planted with a specified mixture of vegetation including hardwoods and other species of vegetation on one half the length and one half the area. This requirement ensures that a corridor for wildlife movement and habitat will be available in the newly created woodland as well as that impacts of development on water quality will be reduced. Finally, by requiring that one half the length and one half the total area of the shore buffer are revegetated, there is ample opportunity to provide views of the water which contribute to the site's attraction for development. Existing vegetation can be used to reduce required landscaping as long as there is not a reduction in site protection. If existing woodlands are disturbed, then a replacement of 1.5 acres of new woodland for every one acre of disturbed woodland is required (Section 6100).

The wetlands which appear on this site are also important for providing wildlife habitat as well as protecting water quality by filtering runoff. Wetlands are an important part of the natural system and are extensively distributed throughout Queen Anne's County. They are regulated by the Federal Government as well as the State of Maryland and the County. It is essential that any development site have its wetlands clearly marked as off-limits to any disturbance.

Countryside District

SITE ANALYSIS



COUNTRYSIDE DISTRICT - RESOURCES TO BE PROTECTED

PERCENT OF RESOURCES TO BE PROTECTED

Tidal Wetlands	28.76	acres
Mature Hardwoods	2.53	acres
Successional Vegetation	.51	acres
Shore Buffer	52.12	acres
Total Resources to be Protected.	83.91	Total acres

Site Capacity Summary

Two development plans for this site appear on pages 11 and 12. In both cases, clustering of dwelling units is implemented. It is especially important to note that this use of clustering limits disturbance while still maintaining views of the water. The CS district requires that a *minimum* of eighty-five percent of the site be left in open space when cluster or planned development is proposed. The development plans reflect this and have utilized only fifteen percent of the site's total area for lots and roads.

The determination of density is conducted through the site capacity analysis described in the first section of this document. On the example site the minimum open space requirement (85% of 170.70 acres) will determine the number of acres required for open space. The total development program on this site allows for 35 homes and 140.9 acres of open space.

Design Intent

The designs on pages 11 and 12 show how the view can be maintained as an important element of the design strategy for this site. There is little or no existing woodland located adjacent to the shoreline. Therefore, the required 50 percent coverage can be placed strategically to ensure that views are maintained. Building lots must be placed outside of the 300 foot shore buffer.

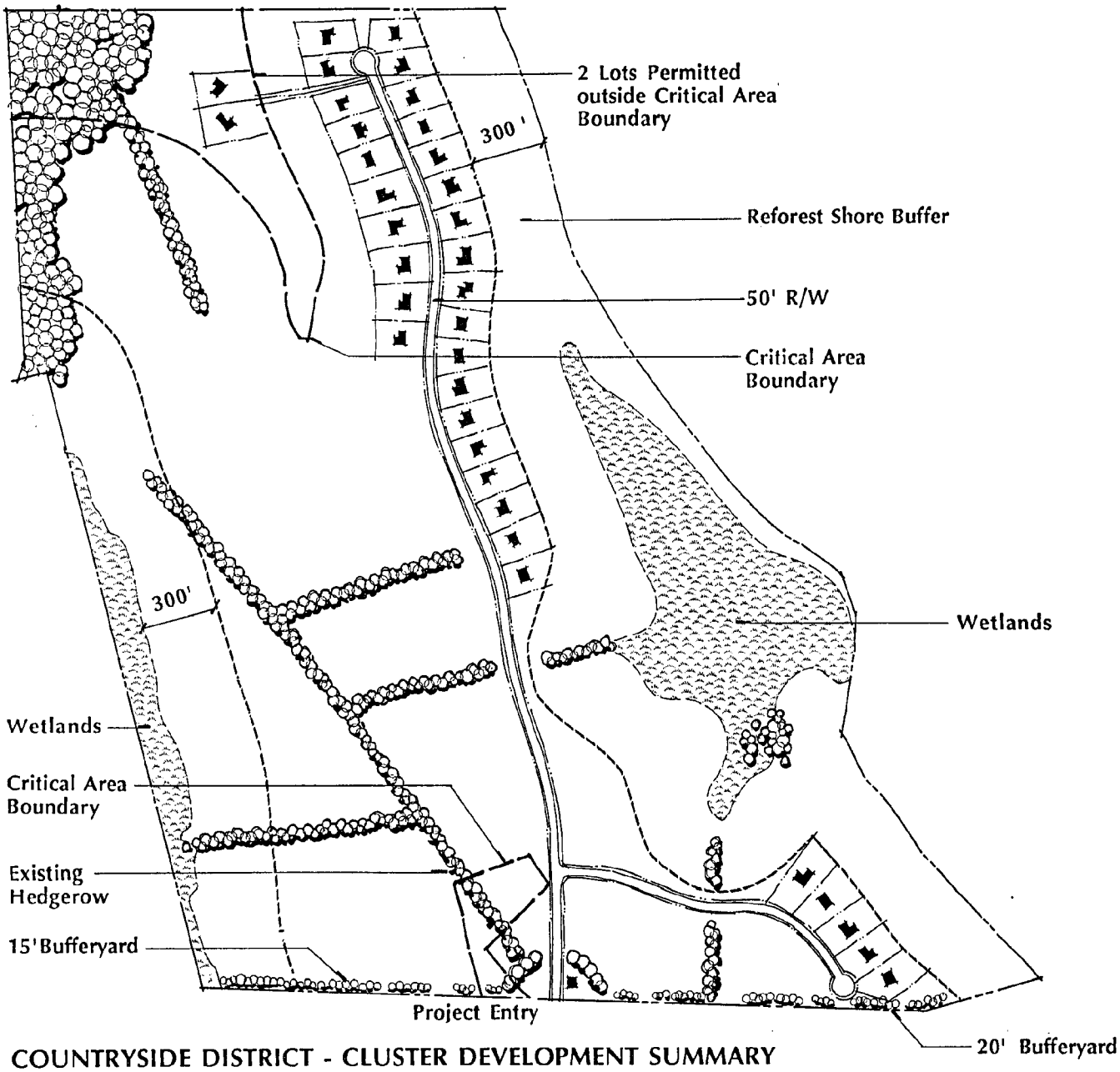
Woodlands which are present or introduced in the Countryside district may serve several functions. They provide cover as well as food to such species as deer, raccoons, and many waterfowl. Additionally, they provide for a natural buffer between adjoining developments, separating each into a distinct community. Furthermore, the woodlands provide an attractive and private location for the siting of homes. Here, it is again important to minimize disturbances in order to ensure that the integrity of the resource is not destroyed while maximizing its value for development. Hedgerows provide similar benefits on a smaller scale and should be afforded a degree of protection.

The conventional design concept shown on page 11 portrays a linear development with ten of the lots separated from the waterfront by the road and another row of lots. Two flag lots are also created.

In the preferred concept on page 12, all the units have access to the waterfront. The clustering of lots into small courts gives each property owner the atmosphere of an individual court identity. These courts provide a safe environmment away from traffic. Lot sizes are smaller than in the conventional concept, which keeps improvement costs to a minimum.

Countryside District

CONVENTIONAL CONCEPT

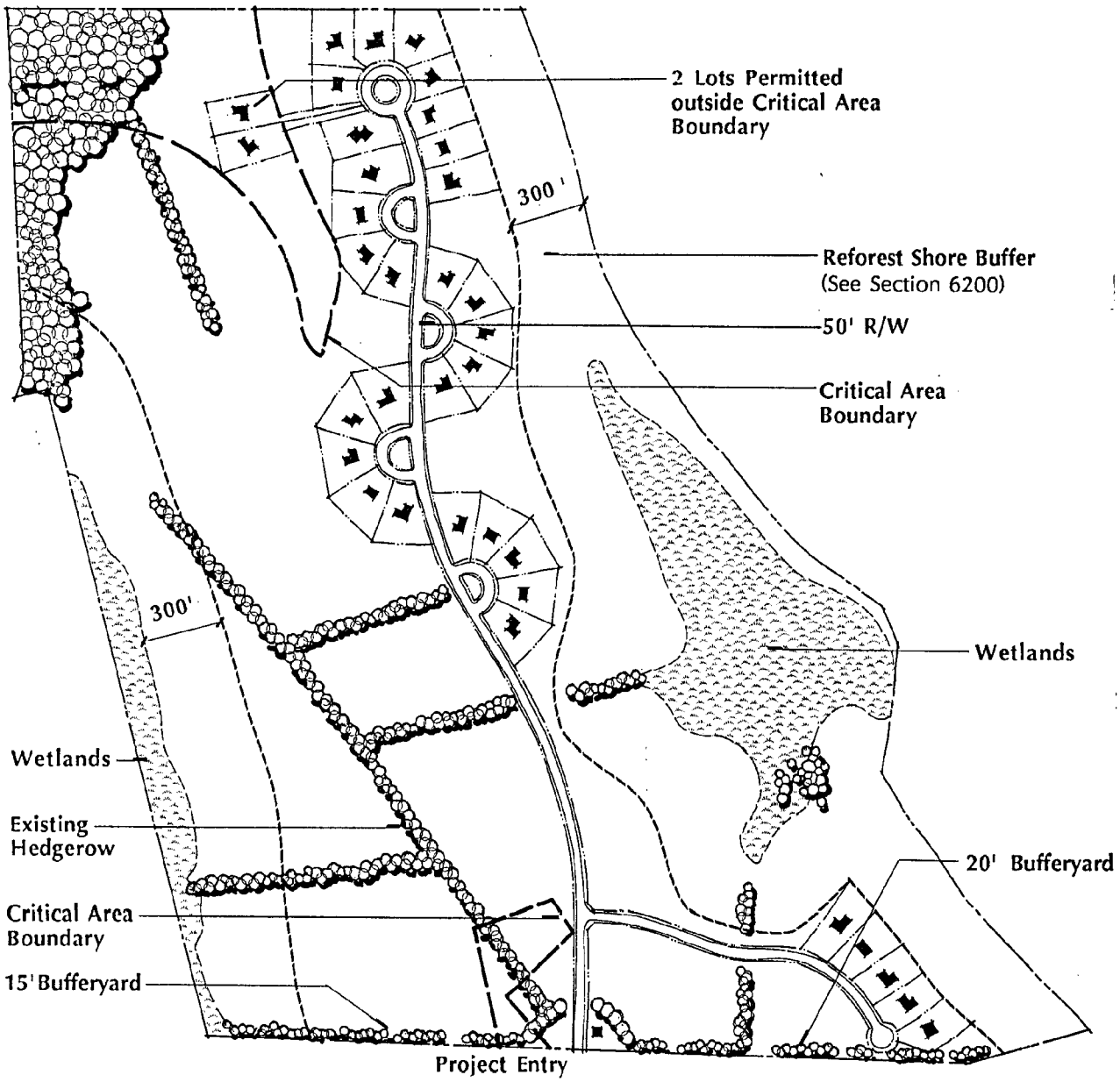


COUNTRYSIDE DISTRICT - CLUSTER DEVELOPMENT SUMMARY

TOTAL SITE AREA	170.70	ACRES
Bufferyards	4.95	acres
Base Site Area	165.75	acres
OSR (165.75 x .85)	140.90	acres
Net Buildable	24.85	acres
Allowable Units		
(165.75 x .20) Critical Areas	33.00	Allowable Uniits
(13.21 x .20) Upland	2.00	Allowable Units
	35.00	Total Allowable Units

Countryside District

PREFERRED CONCEPT



COUNTRYSIDE DISTRICT - CLUSTER DEVELOPMENT SUMMARY

TOTAL SITE AREA	170.70	ACRES
Bufferyards	4.95	acres
Base Site Area	165.75	acres
OSR (165.75 x .85)	140.90	acres
Net Buildable (Critical Area)	24.85	acres
Allowable Units		
(165.75 x .20) Critical Areas	33.00	Allowable Uniits
(13.21 x .20) Upland	2.00	Allowable Units
	35.00	Total Allowable Units

Smaller lots are also more easily maintained, which is an important marketing factor for two income households.

These are not the only development alternatives available to landowners in the CS zone. Sites located in the CS zone may use the following options to increase the number of homes permitted:

1. Shore erosion control density bonus (Section 8000).
2. Transferable development rights (Section 8200).
3. Affordable housing bonus (available only outside the Chesapeake Bay Critical Area) (Section 8400).

In the case of the example site, there are approximately 3,200 linear feet of shoreline. If this entire shoreline were eroding at greater than 4 feet/year, the cost for shore protection would be around $640,000 ($200 per foot x 3,200 feet). This means that erosion control per home would cost approximately $19,394. However, examination of past developments indicates that ten percent of the sales price is a reasonable cost to be absorbed as a cost associated with development. In this case ten percent of the sales price at $150,000/lot would generate only $495,000, which still leaves the development short of its actual shore protection cost of $640,000, producing a shortfall of $145,000. This shortfall equals approximately the sales price of one lot with the ten percent cost for shore erosion. Therefore using option one, this project is eligible for one additional unit to offset the cost of the required shore protection. Landowners who are interested in the use of this option should contact the Planning Office.

The second available option involves the movement of development rights from one area of the County to another. Several basic rules govern the transfer of development rights. First and most important is the requirement that the area sending development rights be appropriately designated. Development rights may be transferred to the CS district from the following districts:

1. Agriculture (1 home per eight acres).
2. Countryside (1 home per five acres).

It is important to note that development potential which is transferred from one area to another may be shifted only into the areas with the same or lesser environmental classification. Development from sites outside the 1000' Chesapeake Bay Critical Area may be shifted only to other sites (or portions of sites) outside the Critical Area. Transfer from the Critical Area to a site outside the Critical Area would be permitted. Given that the use of this provision requires a very specific submittal, land owners interested in transferring or purchasing development rights should contact the Planning Office for a more detailed explanation.

The last development option available to landowners in CS districts (outside the Critical Area) is a density bonus for the construction of affordable housing. This provision allows for the construction of one additional unit for each unit built which meets the following criteria:

1. Subsidized by a government agency.
2. Purchaser has an income equal to or less than eighty percent of the median household income as deter mined by the most recent census.
3. The provision has not been used elsewhere on the same site within the past five years.
4. Affordable housing units can not constitute more than twenty percent of a development, except in developments of ten units or less where no limit will be imposed.
5. A suitable arrangement is made with County, State, or Federal agencies to ensure that the units remain within the specified ranges of affordability.

Persons interested in making use of this provision should contact the Planning Office for additional information.

EXAMPLE II: AGRICULTURAL DISTRICT

Introduction

Agriculture has been and continues to be a traditional land use in Queen Anne's County. Because agriculture is the most common industry in the County, it is very important to minimize its conflicts with residential development and environmental protection. The County seeks to preserve its agricultural areas , maintaining a viable agricultural economy and yet allowing enough flexibility so that farmers can develop residential units on less productive land.

The AG zone has been designed to reduce density from one dwelling per acre (previously allowed by the Zoning Ordinance) to one dwelling per eight acres using a cluster development option in order to maintain a rural farm atmosphere. A minimum of 16 acres is required in order to be considered subdivision under this option.

Site description

The site found on page 15 is currently zoned AG and provides a model for understanding the development and preservation of agricultural land. This site contains 278.98 acres of agricultural land. Additionally, 55.55 acres are woodlands, and 49.1 acres are non-tidal wetlands. The Zoning Ordinance seeks to protect various natural resources within the County. Non-tidal wetlands and woodland forests are considered natural features of the land, and a percentage of these resources must be protected as called for in the Ordinance and Comprehensive Plan. This is done by requiring a percentage of the natural resource to be maintained as open space. Open space ratios have been determined based on the natural features and their location within the County.

Site Capacity Summary

On the example site, 34 dwelling units can be built if the clustering option is employed. The maximum area which may be disturbed is 41.63 acres. Up to fifty percent of the area in mature woodlands and twenty percent of the area non-tidal wetlands on the 278.98 acre site may be disturbed without mitigation (Section 5300).

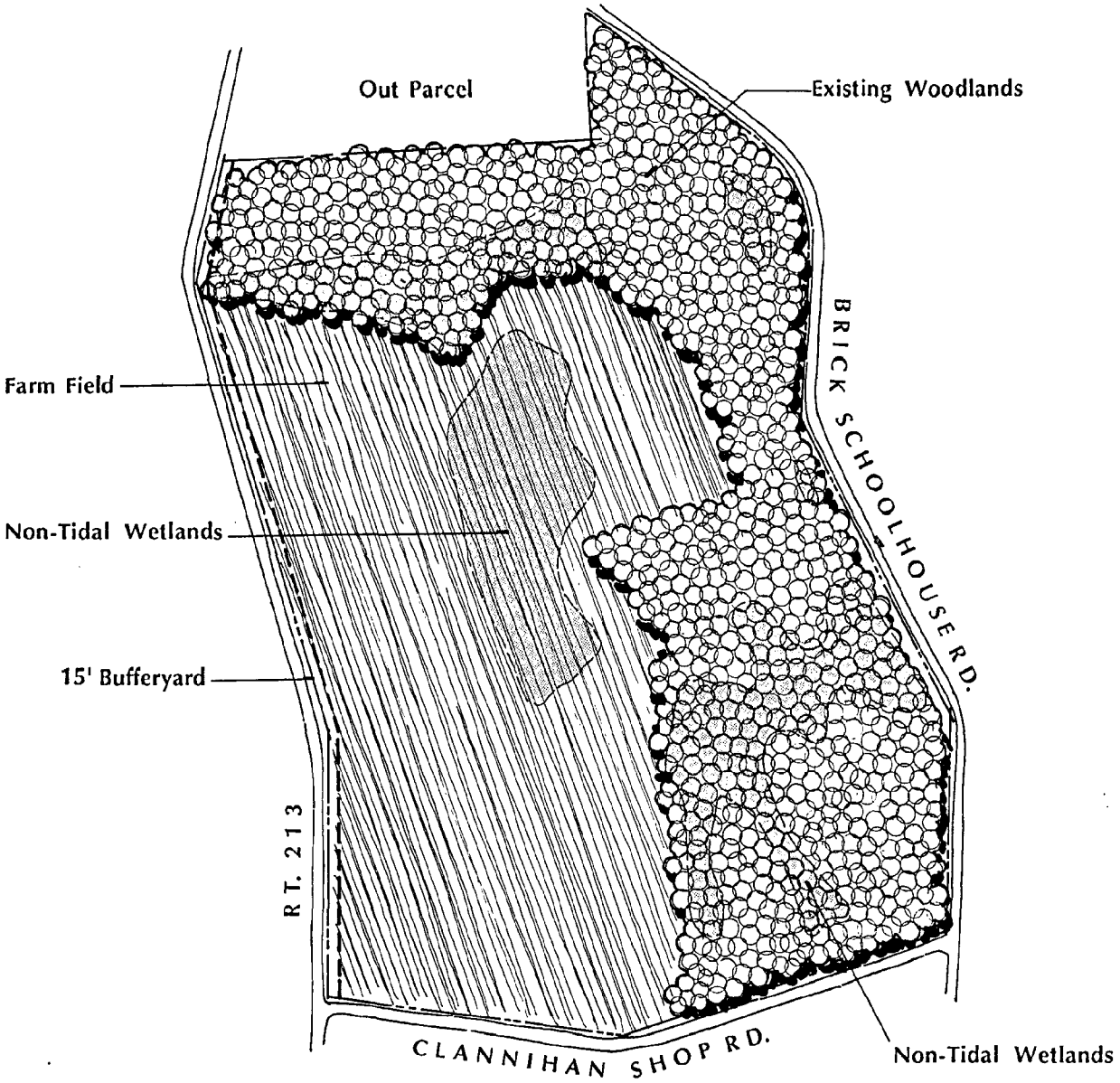
Design Intent

The new Zoning Ordinance provides an alternative which encourages the developer/farmer to cluster lots so that the maximum amount of prime agricultural land can be maintained in productivity. The County also encourages that houses be built in wooded areas where possible to minimize loss of farm land, and to provide the homeowner with buffer protection from farming operations.

Two options for development are open to the landowner. The first is to develop individual single family lots with a minimum size of ten acres. The second alternative involves a cluster development. This option allows the developer to locate development at a higher density of one unit to eight acres on 15 percent of his property, leaving the remaining 85 percent of land for agricultural uses. More lots can be developed with less site impact under this option than with the large lot single family option.

Agricultural District

SITE ANALYSIS



AGRICULTURAL DISTRICT - RESOURCES TO BE PROTECTED

PERCENT OF RESOURCES TO BE PROTECTED

Non-Tidal Wetland	39.28	acres
Drainageway	3.70	acres
Mature Hardwoods	27.75	acres
Farm Field	92.80	acres
Total Resources to be Protected.	163.50	Total acres

The drawings on Page 16 and 17 illustrate three design concepts showing how the 34 dwelling units can be placed in clusters, allowing the maximum amount of open space for agricultural uses. The minimum allowable lot size is 20,000 square feet if individual septic systems are provided, and 10,000 square feet if a common septic system is provided. The minimum lot width is 130 feet. The required building setbacks are 40 feet at the front yard, 20 feet at the side yards, and 50 feet at the rear of the site (see Section 5100). Two off-street parking spaces are required per dwelling unit.

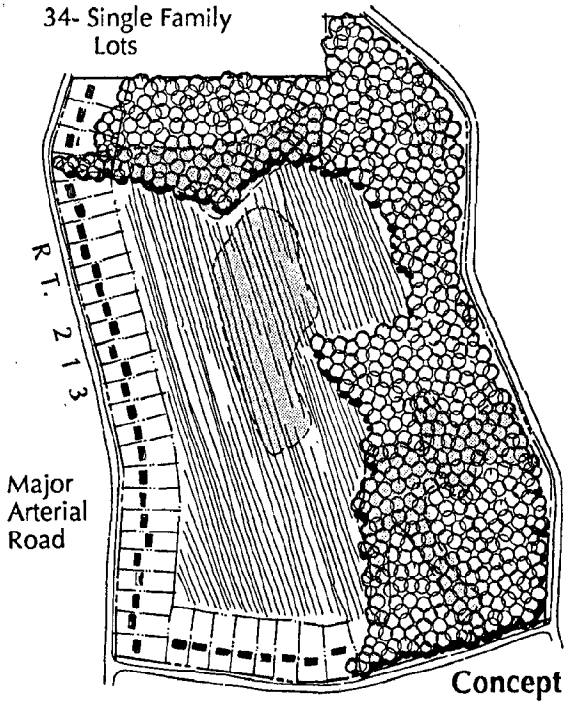
Each design concept has its own merits and deals with vehicular access and impacts on the site in a different manner. In Concept 1, each lot takes direct access from Route 213. This could create potential safety hazards for homeowners and motorists. If access is taken off a county road, approval must be granted by the Queen Anne's County Department of Public Works. If a state highway is involved, approval must be obtained from the State Highway Administration.

The location next to the highway is undesirable due to constant traffic noise. Concept 2 minimizes the access off of Route 213,and concentrates traffic within the development. Concept 3 seems most realistic, with dwelling units divided into three cul-de-sacs. This concept has improved road access while providing the homeowner with a rural atmosphere. Septic field location is facilitated by the fact that the development is located in three separate areas on the site. The development areas are buffered from the highway while the forested area minimizes nuisances from agricultural open space to areas of residential development.

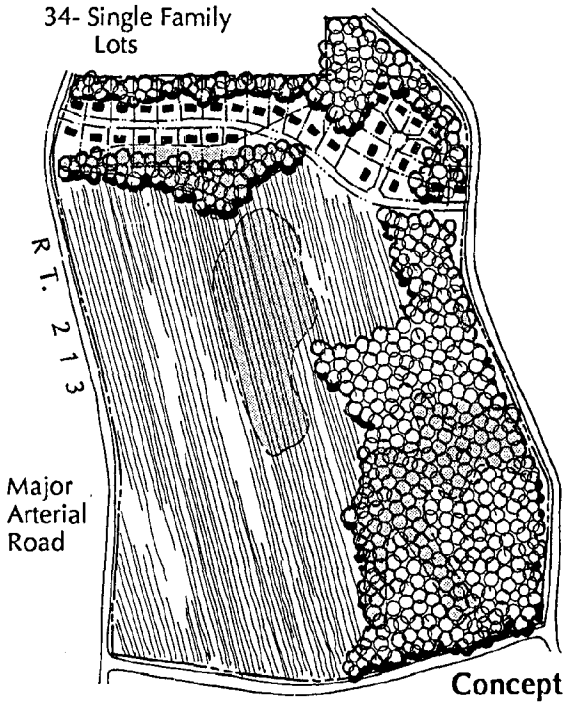
A buffer yard is required along Route 213; however, it may be waived if sufficient landscaping is provided between the residential development and the agricultural land. The buffering is desirable from a visual standpoint and provides a transition between agricultural practices and residential development.

Agricultural District - Cluster Development

ALTERNATIVE CONCEPTS



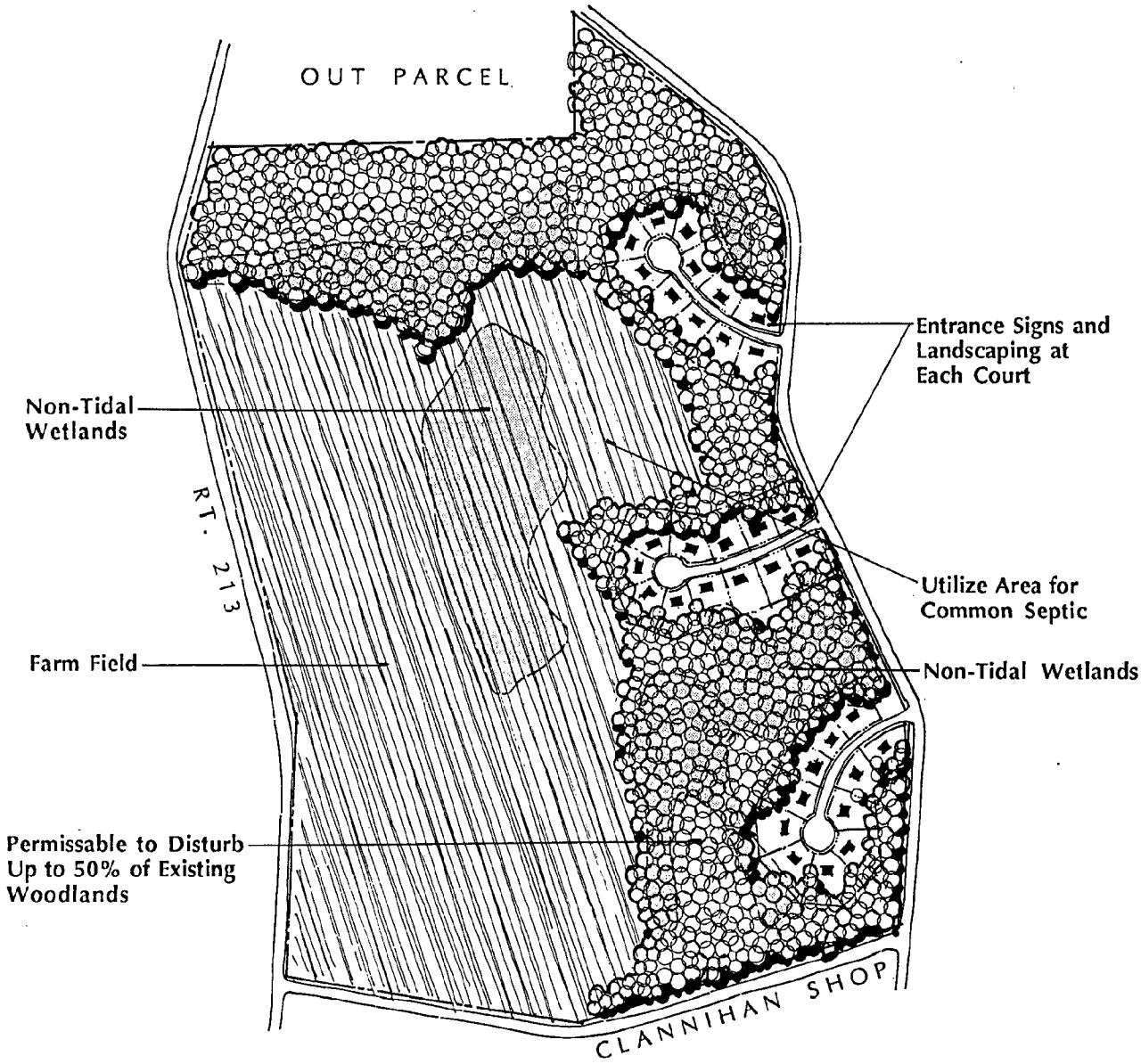
Concept 1



Concept 2

Agricultural District

PREFERRED CONCEPT



AGRICULTURAL DISTRICT - CLUSTER DEVELOPMENT SUMMARY

TOTAL SITE AREA	279.00	ACRES
Bufferyards	1.50	acres
Base Site Area	277.50	acres
OSR (277.5 x .85)	235.85	acres
Net Buildable	41.63	acres
Allowable Units (277.5 x .125)	34	Total Allowable Units

EXAMPLE III: SUBURBAN RESIDENTIAL

Introduction

The Suburban Residential district is intended to provide for the majority of future residential development in the areas of Queen Anne's County served by public sewer. In this district, open space plays an important role as the key element to suburban character. Often, residents are attracted to the County's suburban areas by the presence of nearby rural land; however, that land soon disappears as the community grows and new homes and businesses are built.

Queen Anne's County seeks to insure a high quality of suburban character by encouraging that open space be provided and that cluster and planned developments be implemented. While land may be developed as one acre lots with no open space in the suburban residential district, it is clear that there is substantial economic advantage to developing at densities two or three times higher with the required open space of thirty to forty-five percent. This is intended to discourage the more typical subdivision which occurs in a grid pattern with little or no open space.

Site Description

A typical site in the suburban residential district is shown on page 19. The site contains 116.92 acres. As in the example for the Agricultural district, natural resources exist on the site and are partially protected by the Zoning Ordinance and the site capacity calculations described earlier. The non-tidal wetlands which cover approximately 12 acres on the site are completely protected. Seventy percent of the 31 acres covered by mature hardwood forest and thirty percent of the 3.5 acres in drainageways are also protected.

The site is surrounded on three sides by three different types of roads, each requiring different buffer yards (Section 6300). Arterial and collector streets require larger bufferyards when bordering residential districts because of the noise and pollution generated by traffic. Local residential streets require less bufferyard and landscaping.

Site Capacity

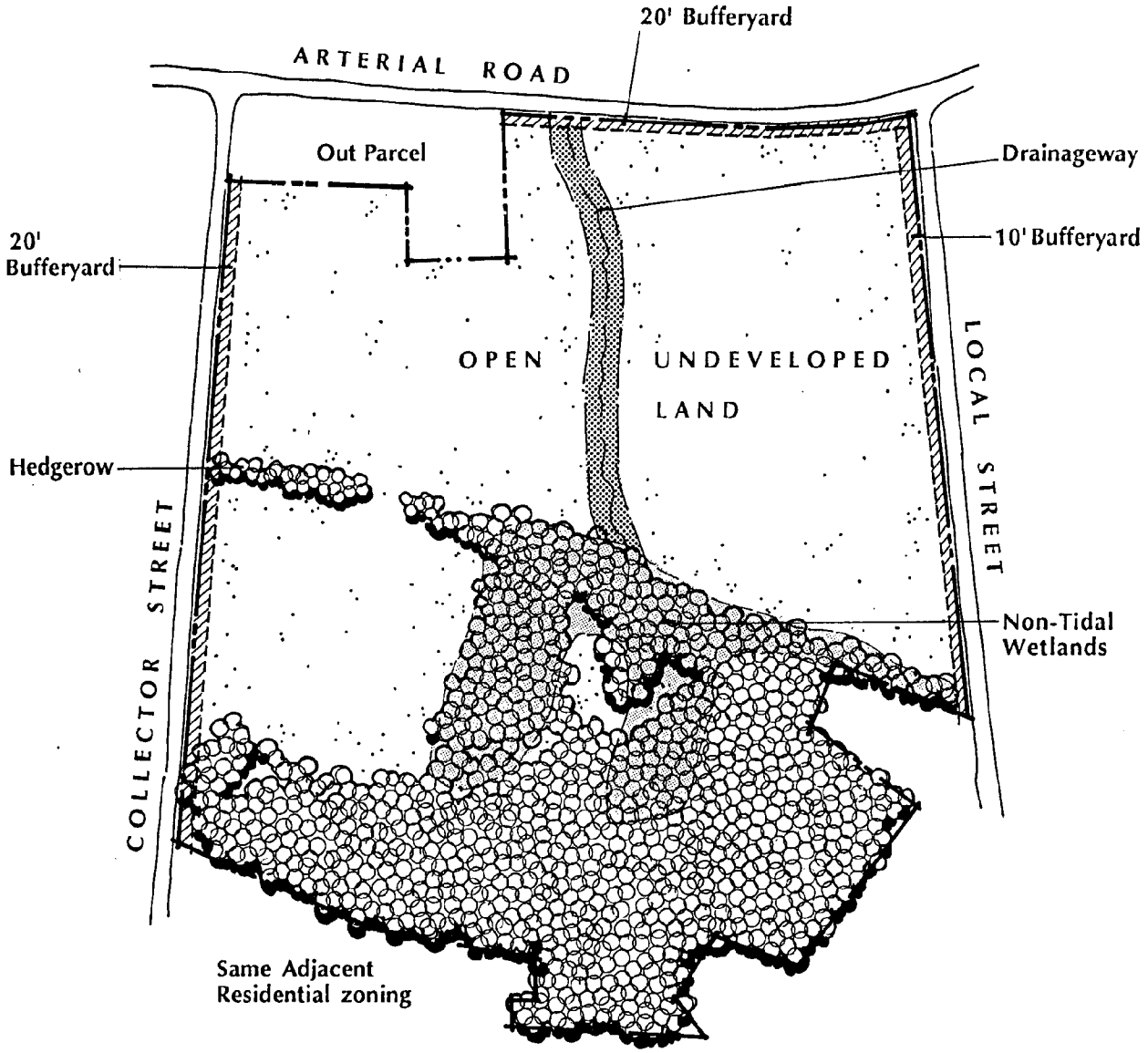
To calculate site capacity for the Suburban Residential district, the same process as the one explained earlier is used. Two types of development are illustrated in this district. The first type is known as cluster development. This type of development requires the developer to provide 20 percent open space with traditional single family residential development (all units detached). The second type of development is a planned development. This type of development allows for a variety of housing types to be used including single family, single family zero lot line, village houses, twin houses, patio houses, atrium houses, townhouses, weak-link townhouses, multiplexes, and apartments. Planned development in the Suburban Residential district requires that 45 percent open space be provided on the site.

As in the example given in the Site Capacity Section, the permitted dwelling units must be compared to the maximum allowable dwelling units and the lower number of the two takes precedence. The open space required on this site is 51.44 acres. The permitted dwelling units is calculated to be 256 units (rounded to next lowest whole number). The maximum allowable dwelling units is calculated to be 228 units (rounded to the next lowest whole number). The lower number of dwelling units figured will dictate the number of dwelling units allowed on the site under cluster development, in this case 228 units.

The same procedure is used in calculating the maximum allowable dwelling units for a planned development. Again the lowest number is used. In this case 388 dwelling units are allowed for a planned development on the example site.

Suburban Residential District

SITE ANALYSIS



SUBURBAN RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT - RESOURCES TO BE PROTECTED

PERCENT OF RESOURCES TO BE PROTECTED

Non-Tidal Wetlands	12.01	acres
Drainegway	1.00	acres
Mature Hardwoods	22.00	acres
Total Resources to beProtected.	35.01	Total acres

Design Intent

The illustrations on pages 20 and 21 depict how a planned development could be sited. The development on this site proposes three different types of housing: town homes, garden apartment/condominiums, and single family residences. Planned development allows the property to be developed at its maximum capacity (388 units), yet allows the developer the flexibility to create an aesthetically pleasing environment with a diversity of housing types.

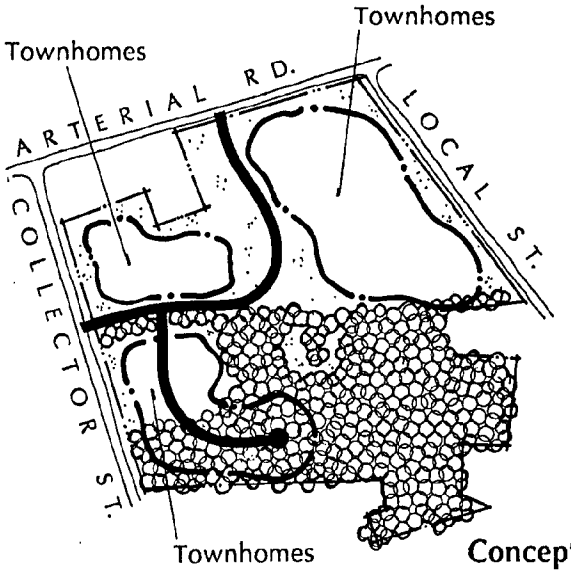
Three design concepts for development are depicted. Concept 1 shows a planned development consisting exclusively of town homes. Concepts 2 and 3 show solutions using a mixture of housing types. By providing a variety of housing types, the developer has the market advantage of providing housing to a broad spectrum of prospective buyers. Concept 2 illustrates two types of housing. Concept 3 offers a more diverse mix of housing types than Concept 1 or Concept 2, with less developed land area. Thus, Concept 3 is the preferred alternative.

Concept 3 is shown fully developed on page 21. Increased buffer areas have been provided along the streets to block out undesirable traffic noise and exhaust fumes, and to create a neighborhood atmosphere within the development. A recreation center has been provided in a central location for use by the three different communities. A system of footpaths is provided to separate pedestrian traffic from vehicular traffic. Existing wetlands have been enhanced to create visual amenities for the development, increasing the value of the units. Access to the development is controlled from major streets and vehicular traffic is selectively guided into the development. Much of the existing forest cover is maintained as open space, enhancing the rural residential character of the site and its marketability.

Suburban Residential District-Planned Development

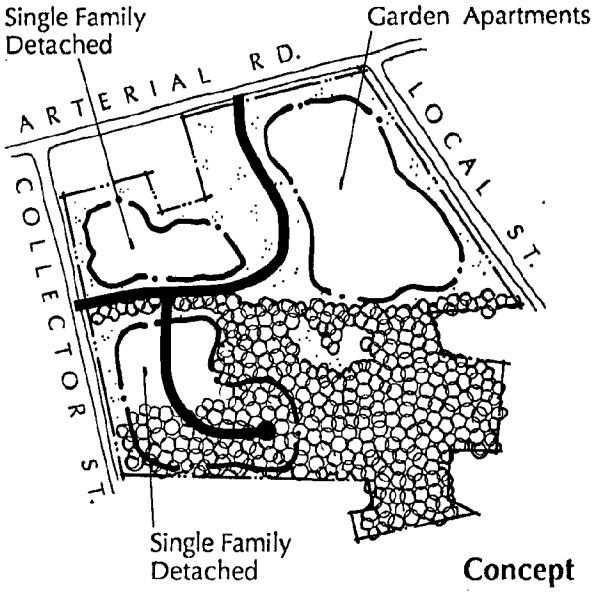
ALTERNATIVE CONCEPTS

TOWNHOUSE CONCEPT



Concept 1

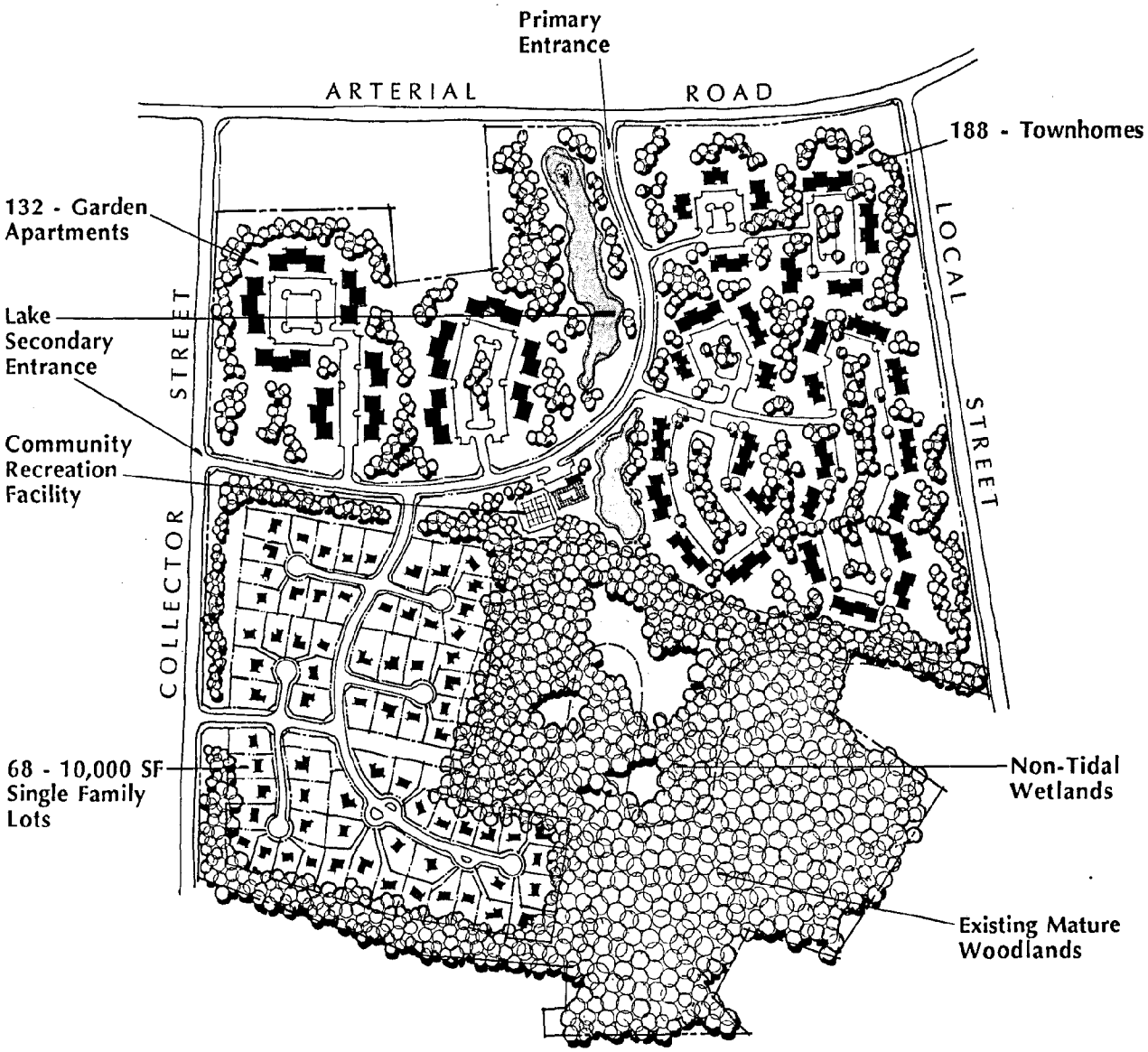
MIXED RESIDENTIAL CONCEPT



Concept 2

Suburban Residential District

PREFERRED CONCEPT - CONCEPT 3



SUBURBAN RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT - PLANNED DEVELOPMENT SUMMARY

TOTAL SITE AREA	116.82	ACRES
Bufferyards	2.5	acres
Base Site Area	114.32	acres
OSR (114.32 x .45)	51.44	acres
Net Buildable	62.88	acres
Allowable Units (114.32 x 34)	388	Total Allowable Units

NON-RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

The community character of Queen Anne's County is of major concern to its residents. Since the location and quality of non-residential development can change the character of an area, there is considerable concern over the economic pressures within the county for this type of growth and development. For this reason it is important to regulate non-residential development even more strictly than residential development.

The procedure for calculating non-residential development site capacity is similar to that used for residential development; the difference is that the permitted maximum floor area is used as the limiting factor.

Base site area and resource protection land area are calculated the same as for residential development, however additional terms are needed to understand the site capacity calculations.

Definitions

Floor area ratio (FAR) - A ratio of the total area of a building to by the base site area (See Section 5200).

Impervious surface - Surfaces which do not absorb water. They consist of all buildings, roads, sidewalks, and any other areas of concrete, asphalt, or similar material.

Landscape surface ratio (LSR) - A ratio of dividing the landscaped area to the base site area. Landscaped areas are areas not covered by impervious surfaces (See Section 5200).

Site Capacity Calculations for Non-Residential Development (Section 5300)

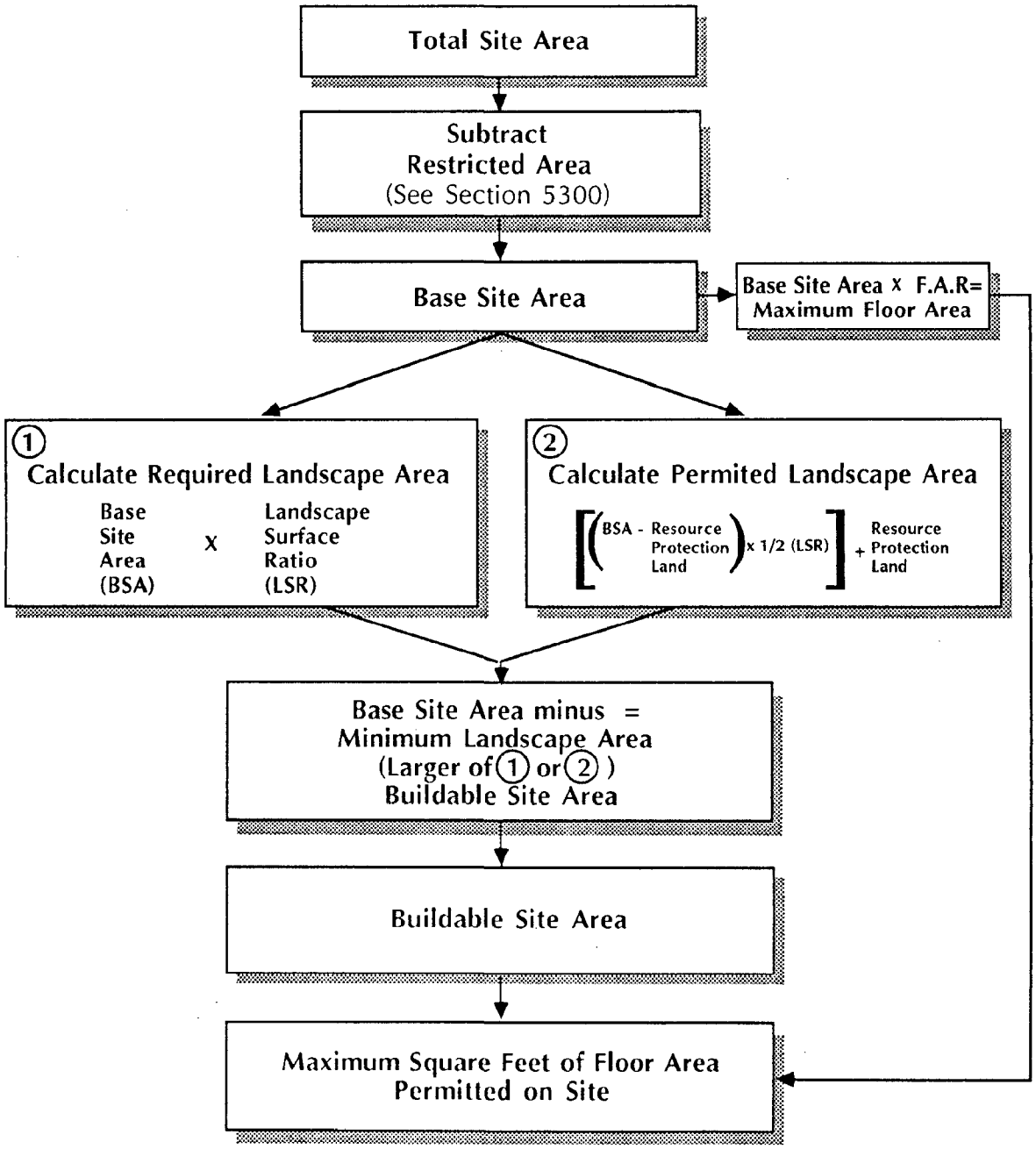
The potential for non-residential development on a site is restricted by a maximum floor area ratio (FAR). This ratio varies depending on the district in which the site is located.

The maximum floor area permitted is calculated by taking the FAR and multiplying it by the base site area. This restricts the amount of floor area within a building that can be utilized on a site.

The total amount of disturbable area on the entire site can be calculated by figuring the minimum landscape area and subtracting it from the base site area. The illustraton on page 23 shows how the minimum landscape area is calculated. The minimum landscape area is then subtracted from the base site area leaving the maximum impervious area permitted. Impervious area is defined as all areas covered by impervious surfaces.

Procedure for Calculating Site Capacity

NON-RESIDENTIAL



NON-RESIDENTIAL DENSITY COMPUTATIONS

EXAMPLE I: SUBURBAN COMMERCIAL DISTRICT

Introduction

The Suburban Commercial district has been designed to provide needed retail, services, offices, and industrial employment at an intensity that is fully compatible with the suburban character of the area. Landscaping, lighting, and signs are all strictly controlled in the district to insure that the proper character is achieved.

Site Capacity Calculations (Section 5300)

Two sites have been chosen from the Suburban Commercial district as examples in this document because the Suburban Commercial district is the most restrictive non-residential development district. The first example is a small site of 1.57 acres in a residential neighborhood. The second example is a 17.5 acre site, demonstrating how a larger commercial development can be blended into a suburban residential neighborhood.

Small Site

The base site area as in the previous sections is established and the site capacity is figured based on required open space and resource protection land. In the case of the 1.57 acre lot found on page 25, .41 acres is lost to buffer yard areas. No natural resources exist on this example site. The base site area is calculated to be 1.16 acres or 50,355 square feet. In non-residential development, the base site area is multiplied by the landscape surface ratio (.55 for SC districts) resulting in .636 acres (27,705 square feet) of required landscape area. The 1.16 acres of buildable land can then be multiplied by one half the required landscape surface ratio (.27) resulting in .31 acres of calculated landscape area. If resource protection land was located on the site, it would then be added to the calculated landscape area resulting in permitted landscape area. However, in this example the calculated landscape area is equal to permitted landscape area because no natural resources exist on the site. The larger of the permitted landscape area (.31 acres) and the required landscape area (.64 acres) is considered the minimum landscape area for the site. In this case the .64 acres of required landscape area is larger and therefore the minimum landscape area required for the example site.

The buildable land can be calculated by subtracting the landscaped area from the base site area. In this example the buildable land is .52 acres. This is the disturbable area on the site where all building, parking, and paving must be located.

The maximum area for building coverage is calculated by multiplying the base site area by the floor area ratio (.20 for suburban commercial) resulting in 10,072 square feet of allowed floor area. In summation, of the 68,389.2 square feet of the total site (1.57 acres), 27,705 square feet must be landscaped and a maximum of 10,072 square feet can be covered by building.

Design Intent

The development of the 1.57 acre site based on these requirements is illustrated on page 25. The building has been located toward the rear of the site to minimize the impact on the residential neighborhood. Parking is buffered and screened from view by a low berm. The use of this berm reduces the size of the plants required for the buffer yard and parking lot plantings.

Parking requirements

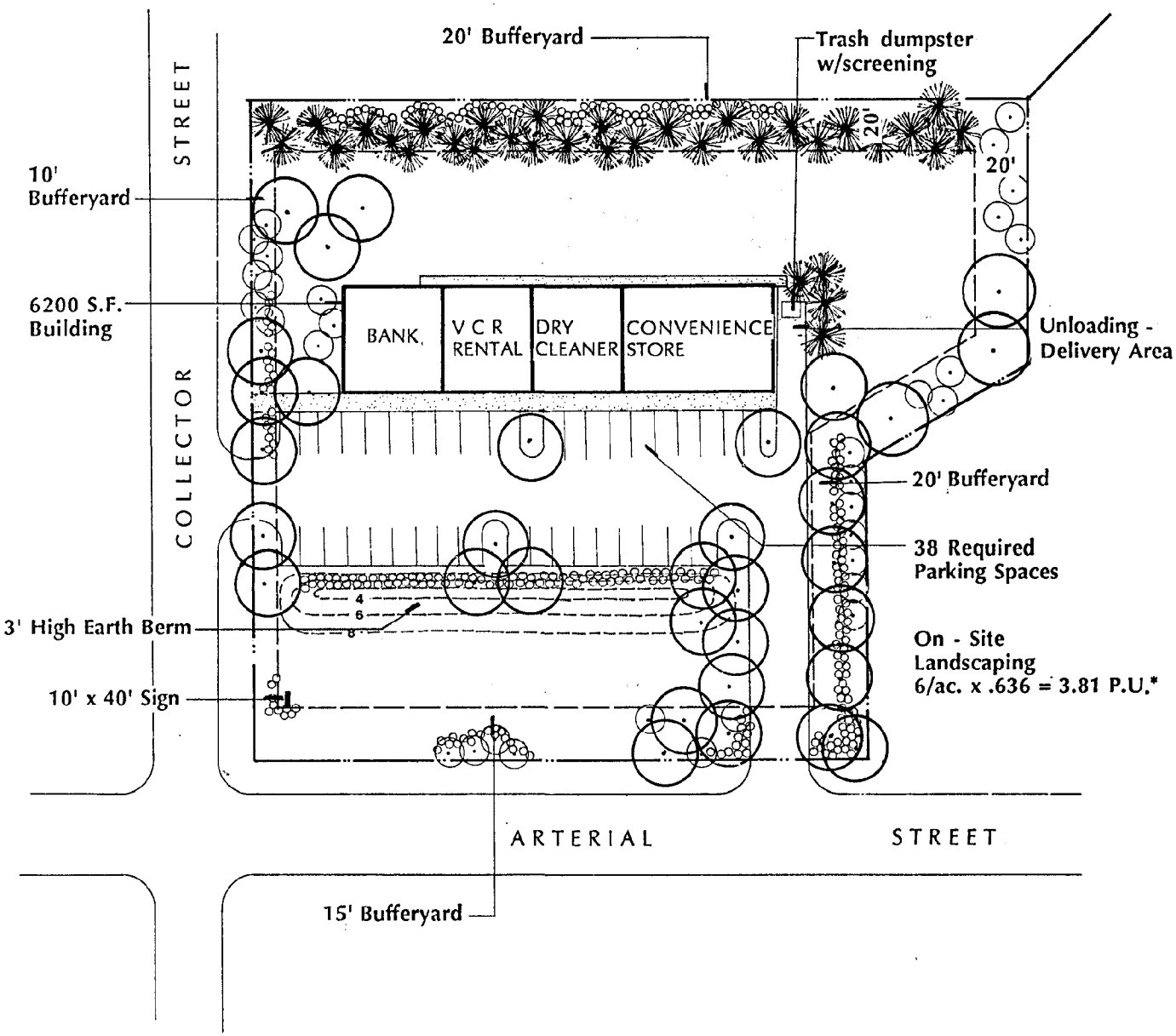
In all non-residential districts there is a required parking standard based on the proposed use (Section 6600). For most commercial uses, parking is based upon the number of square feet of floor area being used. In the 1.57 suburban commercial example, four commercial uses are proposed: a video store, a dry cleaner, a convenience store, and a bank. For the video store, the dry cleaner, and the bank, one parking space per 200 square feet of floor area is required, resulting in 22 spaces. Banks providing drive-in lanes must provide five spaces of off street waiting area per drive-in lane. In the case of the convience store, 16 spaces are required, one space for every 100 square feet of sales area and one space per every 200 square feet of storage area. Total parking for the commercial development is 38 parking spaces or 10,260 square feet.

Landscaping requirements

There are bufferyard landscaping requirements for roads and adjoining property lines separating different districts. There is also an on-lot landscaping requirement (Section 6200), and a landscaping requirement for the parking lot (Section 6200). Page 26 shows how these requirements are calculated.

Suburban Commercial District

1.57 ACRE SITE



SUBURBAN COMMERCIAL DISTRICT SUMMARY

TOTAL SITE AREA	1.57	ACRES
Base Site Area	1.156	acres
Landscaping Surface Ratio	.636	acres
Buildable Land Area	.520	acres
Maximum Building Coverage (1.156 acres x .20)	10,072.00	SF.

*P.U.--Plant Units
(See Section 6200)

Sign Requirements

The County Commissioners have determined that the control of signage associated wtih various land uses in Queen Anne's County is an essential part of protecting the health, safety, and welfare of the citizens. This is based on the desire to minimize traffic hazards from signs which distract a driver's attention from the road. Additionally, the County Commissioners recognize that the primary attraction of the County is its rural appearance. Since the appearance of the County helps drive its economy, it is important to protect that appearance. General restrictions regarding the lighting, size, height and location of signs can be found in Section 6400.

In the example site, a sixty-square-foot wall-mounted or projecting sign is allowed for each individual use, and a one hundred-square-foot free-standing sign with the maximum height of 15 feet is allowed for the entire shopping center. There is direct vehicular access from two streets, therefore, an additional free standing sign is permitted.

Large Site

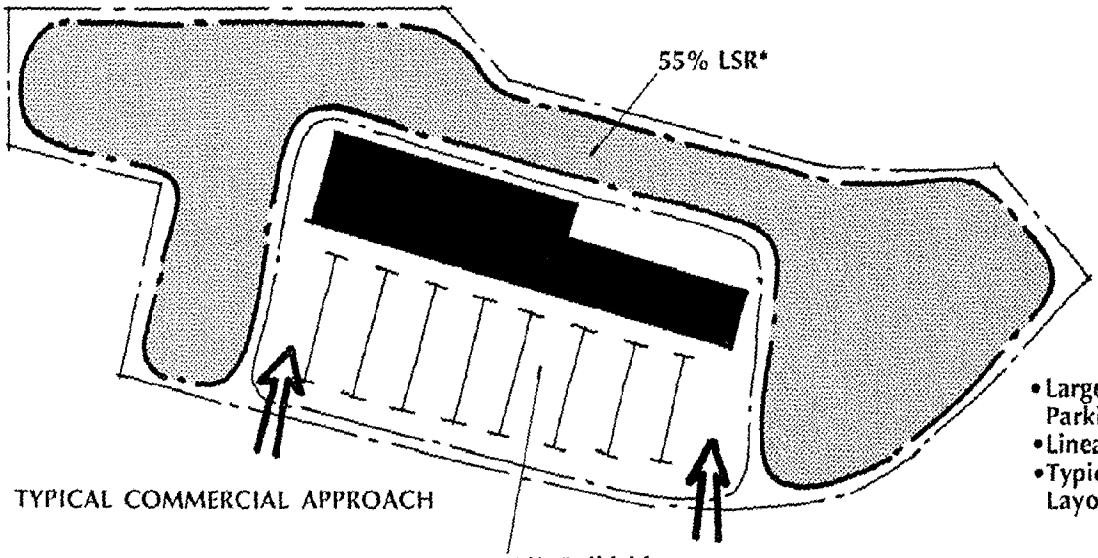
The second example site contains 17.5 acres, also zoned Suburban Commercial. Calculations similar to those used on the smaller site result in 143,348 square feet of buildable area. The required landscape area is 8.965 acres. Parking is computed using the method mentioned in the example of the small site, resulting in 515 required spaces, or 139,050 square feet.

Alternatives for development of this site, utilizing open space and landscaping to enhance the development are shown on page 27. Open space is used as a buffer between the development and residential areas in both alternatives. Alternative A concentrates all development in one area of the site, leaving large vacant areas surrounding the development. This area is left useless to the site and, if not maintained properly, could create an unsightly and harmful situation. Alternative B attempts to spread out the development. This alternative uses the open space as bufferyards to soften the impact of the large development on the surrounding area. Bufferyard areas between the street and parking lot break up the area and soften its impact. This alternative might cost more because more area is disturbed; however, less area is wasted and the potential of misused open space is reduced. Both alternatives satisfy all requirements of the Ordinance, but alternative B is preferred.

Suburban Commercial

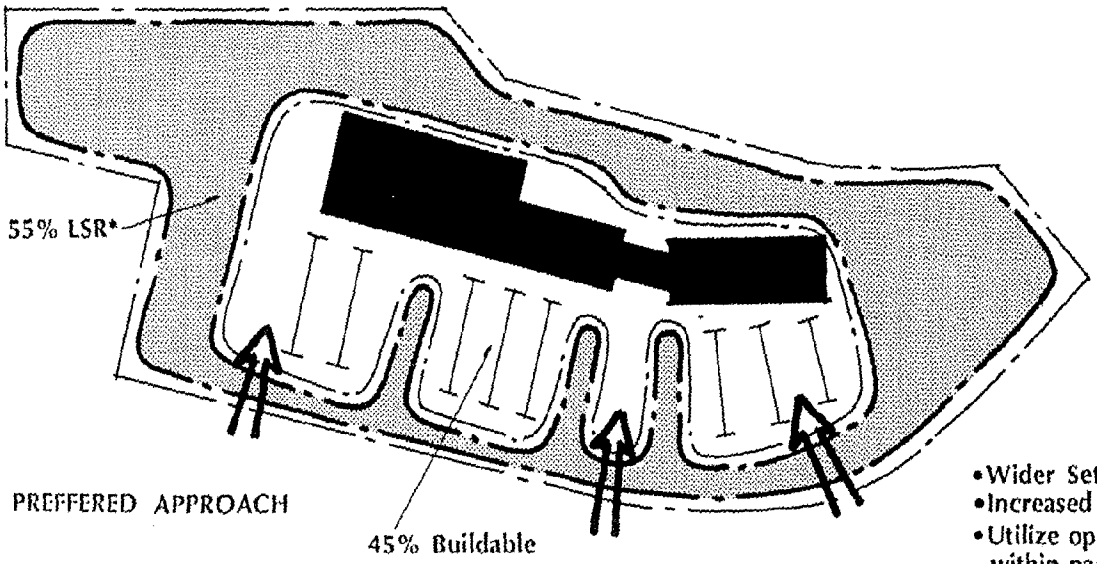
ALTERNATIVE CONCEPTS

17.5 ACRE SITE



TYPICAL COMMERCIAL APPROACH

- Large Expanse of Parking
- Linear Facade
- Typical Building Layout



PREFFERED APPROACH

- Wider Setbacks
- Increased Open Space
- Utilize open space within parking expanse

See Section 5200 for Non-Residential Performance Standards

SITE PLAN AND SUBDIVISION REVIEW PROCESS

All proposals for residential and non-residential development in Queen Anne's County must be submitted for approval by the pertinent County agencies. Applications for development approval are submitted to the Office of Planning and Zoning, which coordinates the review process. This review ensures that all development within the County is in compliance with Queen Anne's regulations for development.

Site plans must be submitted for approval as part of the application process for most development in the County. Applications which do not require site plan approval are:

1. Farm buildings;
2. Additions to an existing non-residential building, if the building and addition will cover less than ten percent of the permitted floor area. For example, if the existing building is 1,500 square feet and the allowed floor area (based on the FAR) is 25,000 square feet, any addition over 1,000 square feet would require site plan approval;
3. An addition or improvement to a non-residential building which when added to any prior addition or improvement to the site, covers less area than ten percent of the landscape surface area which existed on April 9, 1987.

These non-residential projects can apply for building permits without going through the site plan approval process. All residential development of one parcel (more than one dwelling unit requires subdivision approval) is also exempt from site plan approval. All other development plans are subject to the site plan approval process.

SITE PLAN APPROVAL

Site plans submitted to the Department of Planning and Zoning are categorized as major or minor. Minor site plans involve twin house units, a single commercial use or an industrial building which will cover ten percent or less of the lot, or an addition to an existing building. Minor site plans are subjected to a shorter review process and can be approved by the Planning Director, except when proposing the development of a new public or private road. These site plan applications require that six copies of the plan are submitted with the application. A minor site plan will take the minimum of three weeks to process.

Major site plans must always receive approval from the Planning Commission. They will take at least minimum ten weeks to process. A major site plan application requires that 16 copies of the plans be submitted with the application. The information required is similar for both the major and minor applications. The only distinction is the time required for review.

SUBDIVISION APPROVAL

Subdivisions are categorized as major, minor, and administrative. An administrative subdivision is applied for if lot lines are to be changed but the same number of lots or fewer are proposed. A minor subdivision is applied for when the development of up to five lots on an existing public road is proposed. Anything greater than five lots is considered a major subdivision and usually requires the development of a public or private road. The opening of a new private or public road in all cases requires major subdivision approval.

Filing for subdivision review requires the submission of 16 copies for a major subdivision, six copies for a minor subdivision, and three copies for an administrative subdivision.

The review process is the same as that for site plan approval. Copies of the plans submitted with the application are sent out to relevant agencies for comment. These comments are then discussed at the Staff Technical Advisory Committee meeting (STAC). This committee is made up of representatives from each of the reviewing agencies: the Department of Planning and Zoning, the Department of Public Works, the Department of Environmental Health, Soil Conservation Service, and the State Highway Administration when the proposed project is on or near a state highway. The applicant is informed of the recommendations and the plan is revised before going to the Planning Commission. In the case of administrative subdivisions and minor development projects, the plans and comments from all the pertinent agencies are reviewed by the planning staff and approval of the development is given by the Planning Director. The chart on the following page illustrates the approval process.

For application and deadline dates concerning site plan and subdivision review, please contact the Department of Planning and Zoning. Handouts are available detailing the application requirements and review process.

CONCLUSION

The intent of the Queen Anne's County Zoning Ordinance is to provide residents, landowners, and developers with regulations to protect their interests. It also provides guidelines which permit growth in the County to continue in a manner more compatible with the preservation and enhancement of the County's unique qualities.

This publication is intended to clarify the use and intent of the Ordinance. It is meant to be used as an aid and does not contain the solutions to all development related problems. If you or an organization you belong to would like additional information, please contact the Department of Planning and Zoning at (301) 758-1255.

APPENDIX

Department of Environmental Health
208 North Commerce Street
Centreville, Maryland 21617
(301) 758-2281

Department of Planning and Zoning
208 North Commerce Street
Centreville, Maryland 21617
(301) 758-1255

Department of Public Works
Post Office Box 56
Centreville, Maryland 21617
(301) 758-0925

Soil Conservation Service
Federal Building
Centreville, Maryland 21617
(301) 758-1671

State Highway Administration (Non-Residential Development)
Bureau of Engineering and Access Permits
Post Office Box 717
707 North Calvert Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21203
(301) 333-1350

State Highway Administration (Residential Development)
P.O. Box 217
Centreville, Maryland 21617

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