

*Chapter VI: D*

**LAND USE:  
JERICHO PLANNING AREA**

**ADOPTED  
AUGUST 4, 2009**

## *Chapter VI: D* **JERICHO PLANNING AREA**

### **PLANNING AREA PROFILE:**

#### **Location**

The Jericho Planning area is located in the central portion of the Town of Smithfield, just southeast of the Downtown Area. It is bounded on the north by the Downtown Area and Little Creek, on the south and west by the Route 10 Bypass and on the east by Cypress Creek. The Planning Area consists of approximately 425 acres.

#### **Existing Land Use and Transportation System**

The Jericho Planning Area is a largely undeveloped area marked by the presence of valuable environmental and historic resources. It is the home of Windsor Castle, a farm estate overlooking Cypress Creek which has been preserved in its pristine state and serves as one of the most cherished historic resources in the Town. The only densely developed area within the Planning Area is the residential area adjacent to Cedar Street which fronts Little Creek. The other populated area in the Planning Area is Jericho Estates, a subdivision containing twenty-one estate lots planned for low density single family detached residences. Considered together, existing development accounts for approximately 32 total acres in the Planning Area, or roughly 8% of the total land area. The balance of the Planning Area consists of vacant farmland, passive open space and sensitive environmental areas.

Cedar Street and Jericho Road provide the principal means of access in and out of the Planning Area. Both of these roads function as rural parkways connecting the low density development and historic resources with the nearby urban center of the Town. Neither of these roads is designed to handle high volumes of vehicular traffic; in fact, neither have marked pavement. The Planning Area enjoys no access from the adjacent State Route 10 Bypass, which is a limited access state highway. Access was granted to the neighboring Cypress Creek subdivision on the condition that no access is provided to the north into the Planning Area. The Town feared that access into the area would threaten the stability of the preserved Windsor Castle property and the valuable farmland that surrounds it. The Town still supports this strategy today, and no access is likely to be made available to the Planning Area in the foreseeable future.

### **Existing Environmental Considerations**

The Planning Area's development potential is seriously constrained by the presence of Little Creek and Cypress Creek along its northern and eastern boundaries, respectively. Little Creek bisects the northwestern portion of the Planning Area and forms a natural transitional boundary between the residential development along Cedar Street and the adjacent Downtown Area and Windsor Castle and the surrounding farmland. Although only 10% of the total Planning Area, approximately 41 acres, have topographic and wetland characteristics which make them unsuitable for urban development, these marshlands and tidal waterways would be seriously impacted by development on adjacent ridges and should be protected. Of the Planning Area's 425 total acres, approximately 72 (17%) have been identified as having prime development potential. However, the entire Planning Area drains directly into these two major waterways; thus, any future development of the land suitable for development in the area must incorporate appropriate stormwater management principles in its design in order to sufficiently protect these valuable water resources.

### **JERICHO LAND USE PLAN**

The Jericho Planning Area is planned for the preservation of its valuable historic and environmental resources, the conservation of its vast amount of undeveloped farmland, and the gradual expansion of the residential area between Cedar Street and Little Creek. Primary emphasis is placed upon the Town being proactive with respect to protecting one of its most cherished historic resources, the Windsor Castle estate, as well as the surrounding farmland which overlooks both Cypress Creek and Little Creek. In the following sections, specific land use recommendations are presented for the three Sub-Areas identified in the Jericho Planning Area.

#### **Sub-Area 1 Recommendations**

Sub-Area 1 is located in the northwestern portion of the Jericho Planning Area. It is bounded on the north and east by the residential and public uses adjacent to Cedar, Hill and West Main streets, on the west by the Route 10 Bypass and on the south by Little Creek. Sub-Area 1 is heavily wooded and overlooks Little Creek. It covers approximately 15 acres and is planned for attached residential development, at a density of 6-8 dwelling units per acre. At this proposed density, Sub-Area 1 could support between 68 and 90 new dwelling units within its 11.3 net developable acres.

The major issues involved with the potential development of this Sub-Area are (1) the appropriate density of future development and (2) sensitive environmental issues. The Attached Residential land use designation complements the previously stated vision expressed for the property in past Comprehensive Planning efforts. Past discussions of the site have included the potential for adding an assisted living facility to the site, a use which could be supported under existing zoning via a special use permit.

The assisted living facility would fulfill a need expressed several times by citizens in the survey distributed as part of the Comprehensive Planning process. Furthermore, the ridges overlooking the banks of Little Creek offer dramatic views for the development of well-sited, low density single family homes. It will be imperative that the Town ensure that these planned single family homes are thoughtfully sited and incorporate suitable stormwater management practices that will minimize the impact of future development on the creek and downstream waters.

### **Sub-Area 2 Recommendations**

Sub-Area 2 is located in the southwestern portion of the Jericho Planning Area. It is bounded on the west by Cedar Street, on the north by a portion of Little Creek and Sub-Area 3, on the south by Cedar Street and the Route 10 Bypass and on the east by Sub-Area 3. The 46.9 acre Sub-Area is planned for low density residential. This land use designation allows low density residential development at a ratio of between 1 and 3 dwelling unit per acre. At this density, between approximately 44 and 133 single family detached dwelling units could be located within the Sub-Area's 44.2 net developable acres.

The major issues involved with the potential development of this Sub-Area are (1) vehicular access, (2) provision of public utilities and (3) sensitive environmental areas. Presently, the only vehicular access into the Sub-Area is provided by the extension of Cedar Street extending along the Sub-Area's southern boundary to its intersection with Jericho Road, running parallel to the Route 10 Bypass. It is likely that this road will need to be improved to meet VDOT's public street standards in order to serve the residential development planned for this Sub-Area. However, a TIA in accord with the Commonwealth's 527 guidelines should be prepared in order to quantify the ultimate impact on this road and appropriateness and phasing of future improvements.

The Sub-Area also currently lacks access to sufficient public utilities to develop the land as is recommended. An 8" water line terminates at the end of Trumpet Road in the Jericho Estates subdivision and would need to be extended to provide public water to the Sub-Area. Any future development in the Sub-Area would have to include provisions for running a sewer line from the 30" HRSD pipe that runs parallel to the Route 10 Bypass to allow each residence to tap into the line.

Consideration of sensitive environmental areas will also play an important role in the future development of the Sub-Area. The home sites should be sited well away from the wooded areas that offer a natural buffer from the marshlands surrounding Little Creek. A setback of at least 75 feet should be maintained from Cedar Street. A landscape buffer consisting of trees and hedging should be planted within the setback in order to adequately buffer the future residences from the light and sound associated with traffic on the adjacent Route 10 Bypass. The Town should encourage the future landscape buffer to be supplemented by an appropriate wooden fencing running along the boundary of the property as part of any future development.

The Town should encourage the use of clustering in the ultimate home siting in order to maximize the future preservation and possible conservation of open space within the Sub-Area. The residences should also incorporate stormwater management practices and erosion and sedimentation control measures sufficient to protect and preserve these marshlands and waterways, as well as downstream ecosystems.

### **Sub-Area 3 Recommendations**

Sub-Area 3 is located in the central portion of the Jericho Planning Area. It is bounded on the north by Little Creek and the residential neighborhood adjacent to South Church Street, on the west by the Route 10 Bypass, on the south by the existing Jericho Estates residential development and the Route 10 Bypass and on the east by Cypress Creek. The entire 208.8 acre sub-area is planned for parks and recreation.

In 2007 the Town announced its intentions to acquire the historic Windsor Castle farm, located within Sub-Area 3. In 2007, the Town approved an amendment to the Comprehensive Plan changing the recommended land use designation for the Sub-Area to provide for the use of the Windsor Castle farm property as a Public Park. The Town also amended its Capital Improvement Program to include this property acquisition and future public park construction. These moves were made in direct response to the Citizen Survey feedback received during solicitation of public opinion during the 2009 Comprehensive Plan Update. In the survey, respondents expressed a strong desire to conserve the land adjacent to the two creeks, as well as the adjacent Windsor Castle property. Respondents also expressed a need for additional public parks and recreational opportunities. In 2008, the Town commissioned LandMark Design Group to prepare formal plans for a proposed park on the property. Input and design concepts received this past year from consultants hired by the current property owner were also taken into consideration in developing this plan

One year after the Smithfield Town Council announced its intentions to acquire the historic Windsor Castle farm, during which the Town held many productive discussions with the property owner, the council voted unanimously at its meeting on February 5, 2008 to adopt the Windsor Castle Park Master Plan prepared by LandMark Design Group. The town's adopted master plan provides for passive recreational use on the site, being sensitive to the state historic conservation easement which has presently been placed on 42 acres of the overall property including the private home and outbuildings. A copy of the approved plan is provided on the following page. Extensive trails will encompass the property affording the public the opportunity to experience the diversity of the site from woodlands, agricultural fields and marsh. The trail system also includes proposed pedestrian boardwalk connections to other areas within the historic district. A kayak and canoe launch is planned along Cypress Creek and equestrian trails are included as well on a portion of the park. Greater details regarding the proposed design, cost estimates and phasing of improvements will be forthcoming and will be done in close coordination with the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Virginia Marine Resources Commission, US Army Corps of Engineers, Isle of Wight County Wetlands Board and the town's appointed boards and citizens.



In 2008, the Town passed a resolution approving a park for public use on the property contained in the Sub-Area. The resolution directed the acquisition of the property in order that it be used as a public park. The property, which consists of open fields and wooded areas adjoining Cypress Creek, is located entirely within the Town. The portion of the Windsor Castle property to be acquired by the Town in fee simple is adjacent to approximately 42.09 acres of land on which is situated an historic manor house known as Windsor Castle. The property on which the manor house is located is subject to an easement granted to the Commonwealth of Virginia, Board of Historic Resources pursuant to the Virginia Open Space Land Act, for the purposes of the preservation of Windsor Castle and the protection of its historic and architectural features, and the protection of the water quality within the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

The major issues involved with the potential development of this sub-area are (1) preservation of the existing historic resources and sensitive environmental areas, (2) fulfilling the expressed public need for open space, passive recreation areas, and water access within the Town for use by the Town's citizens, tourists, and the public at large, (3) promoting pedestrian linkages to South Church Street and the Downtown Area, and (4) linking tourism to recreation and open space opportunities via pedestrian connections and formal interpretation exhibits within the Planning Area and the adjacent Downtown Area.

As has been expressed in the Citizen's Attitudinal Survey and countless other public input sessions, there is a public need for open space, passive recreational areas, and water access within the Town of Smithfield for use by the Town's citizens, tourists, and the public at large. Sub-Area 3 is ideally situated for use as a public park. Portions of the property are wooded and portions are open land, which will provide a variety of types of hiking trails. It is close to heavily populated neighborhoods, providing for easy access by residents, and it can be accessed from public roads and by a proposed raised walkway over the water, as reflected in the master plan for the park. Scenic vistas overlooking Cypress Creek will be preserved within the Park. Further, direct public access to Cypress Creek will be provided for canoeing and kayaking. This will fill a need expressed as far back as the 1999 Comprehensive Plan Update. Preserving the open space and the scenic vistas in the Sub-Area, and establishing the property as a public park is consistent with the purposes of the Preservation Easement. The trail and park entrance easements which the Town seeks to acquire will remain subject to the Preservation Easement.

The entire Windsor Castle estate is included in the Town's Historic District and includes the main farm house and an extensive collection of outbuildings sited next to open fields. The sub-area incorporates each of these main structures and the surrounding fields between Jericho Road and Cypress Creek. The preservation of Windsor Castle could provide a significant impetus towards meeting the Town's established goals of boosting tourism in the area and providing more public open space for its citizens. However, in order to ensure that the project achieves its full potential, the Town should incorporate the historic site into its tourism

marketing strategy and should provide the necessary physical improvements to increase pedestrian accessibility to the estate. In order to achieve this, the Town should promote pedestrian linkages to the site from South Church Street and the Downtown Area. Windsor Castle is currently connected to South Church Street and the Downtown Area by Jericho Road, a partially cobbled brick street which has been preserved, offering a charming walk for residents and visitors exploring beyond the Victorian homes that line South Church Street. The Town should explore the feasibility of increasing its promotion of this walkway as part of historic walking tours, thereby strengthening the connection between the estate and the balance of the Historic Area. The Town should also continue its policy of discouraging the use of Jericho Road as a means of vehicular movement between Jericho Estates and Windsor Castle to South Church Street and vice-versa, however, due to the limited capacity of the Jericho Road/South Church Street intersection.

#### **Sub-Area 4 Recommendations**

Sub-Area 4 is located in the southeastern portion of the Jericho Planning Area. It is bounded on the north and west by a tributary of Cypress Creek, on the south by the Route 10 Bypass and on the east by Cypress Creek. The 80 acre Sub-Area is planned for community conservation. This land use designation allows extremely low density residential development at a ratio of up to 1 dwelling unit per acre. At this density, approximately sixteen single family detached dwelling units could be located within the Sub-Area's 16.4 net developable acres, assuming that a special use permit could be obtained for the site.

The major issues involved with the potential development of this Sub-Area are (1) vehicular access, (2) provision of public utilities and (3) sensitive environmental areas. This Sub-Area has been rendered an effectively isolated land area within the Jericho Planning Area due to the routing of the limited access Route 10 Bypass to the south and the encroachment of sensitive environmental areas which define its western boundary. Presently, the only vehicular access into the Sub-Area is provided by a dirt road extension of Cedar Street beginning at its intersection with Jericho Road and running parallel to the Route 10 Bypass. This road will need to be improved to meet VDOT's private, rural street standards in order to serve the residential development planned for this Sub-Area. Given the limited development potential of the site and the future land use recommendation, it would probably be most practical for the access road to be maintained as a private road. In order to achieve this, the landowner would need to seek a waiver of public road maintenance and approval and a conditional use permit as part of ultimate land development and road construction.

The Sub-Area also currently lacks access to sufficient public utilities to develop the land as is recommended. An 8" water line terminates at the end of Trumpet Road in the Jericho Estates subdivision and would need to be extended to provide public water to the Sub-Area. Any future development in the Sub-Area would have to include provisions for running a sewer line from the 30" HRSD pipe that runs parallel to the Route 10 Bypass to allow each residence to tap into the line.

Consideration of sensitive environmental areas will also play an important role in the future development of the Sub-Area. The home sites should be sited well away from the wooded areas that offer a natural buffer from the marshlands surrounding Cypress Creek and its tributaries. The Town should encourage the use of clustering in the ultimate home siting in order to maximize the future preservation and possible conservation of open space within the Sub-Area. The residences should be located such that vistas from the Bypass and Sub-Area 2 across Cypress Creek are not overtly compromised. The residences should also incorporate stormwater management practices and erosion and sedimentation control measures sufficient to protect and preserve these marshlands and waterways, as well as downstream ecosystems.

### **FUTURE LAND USE SUMMARY**

The Comprehensive Plan projects the Jericho Planning Area as a largely undeveloped area devoted to the preservation of valuable historic and environmental resources, the conservation of open space and the provision of much-needed public park space. Intermingled within these historic resources and protected open spaces, the Planning Area maintains the capability to develop scattered low density single family residential development that would complement the existing single family subdivisions that exist in the Area, as well as reserving the right to develop an assisted living facility targeting local retirees near Cedar Street.

The Jericho Planning Area has the potential to accommodate between approximately 128 and 239 new households at full build-out. However, it is highly unlikely that this density will actually be met within the Planning Area, at least in the near planning term, given the dominance of C-C, Community Conservation zoning ascribed to parcels within the Area. The C-C zoning district was created to provide a vehicle by which agricultural, forestry, open space and other lands of rural character within the Town may be maintained in their current use on an interim basis until such point in time when development consistent with the adopted Future Land Use Plan may be pursued through a zoning amendment. New residential subdivisions are not permitted in this district, except by special use permit for subdivisions with not more than five lots. All proposed subdivisions for residential purposes must be individually rezoned to a residential zoning district compatible with the Comprehensive Plan and pursuant to provisions of the Zoning Ordinance. Thus, a substantial change to the future land use plan designation for the property and a rezoning of the property would be necessary to reach the range of total new dwelling units projected above.

This Planning Area is particularly important because it affords the Town an opportunity to exhibit its firm commitment to meeting two of its primary strategic goals: preserving the Windsor Castle property and providing more public park space for its residents and visitors. No future development should take place in the Planning Area until the required, extensive utility and transportation improvements are completed. The table on the following page summarizes the development potential of each of the Sub-Areas as recognized in the Plan.

