

§15.2-22xx. Designated Growth Areas. In order to fulfill the intent of this Chapter, as specifically declared in § 15.2-2200 and § 15.2-2223 and as otherwise set forth in this Chapter, the following provisions shall be incorporated into the comprehensive plans of localities specified herein and supported by other policies, provisions, plans and ordinances.

- A. Every locality that has adopted zoning pursuant to Article 7 (§ 15.2-2280 et seq.) of this chapter and that (i) has a population of at least 20,000 and population growth of at least 5% or (ii) has population growth of 15% or more since the last decennial census, shall, and any other locality may, establish one or more designated growth areas. “Designated Growth Area” is defined as that area or areas of the locality in which the locality will focus the bulk of its foreseeable growth in order to reduce the negative impacts of sprawling development on the environment, infrastructure, community facilities and state and local public investments. Localities may refer to designated growth areas in any manner and with any terminology as long as the purposes set forth in this section are achieved.
- B. Designated growth areas shall be located so as to maximize the opportunities afforded by existing transportation, utility and other public infrastructure and minimize the need to develop infrastructure in locations distant from the designated growth areas. Designated growth areas shall exclude from development all special flood hazard areas as shown on the community Flood Insurance Rate Maps published by the National Flood Insurance Program of the Federal Emergency Management Agency.
- C. Towns and counties shall cooperate in the establishment of designated growth areas; cities shall cooperate with the adjacent counties in establishing designated growth areas.
- D. Designated growth areas shall be identified in local Comprehensive Plans and shall be shown on future land use maps contained in such Comprehensive Plans.
- E. The designated growth area(s) shall be designed to accommodate at least 20 years of growth in the locality based on population growth estimated by federal, state and/or local agencies and as verified and validated by the local planning district commission; likewise, the designated growth area shall also be planned to accommodate at least 20 years of commercial, retail and office growth within the locality.
- F. Designated growth areas shall be designated as receiving areas for any transfer of development rights program in the locality. Towns and cities may by agreement accept development rights from adjoining counties; such agreements may contain provisions for sharing revenues and infrastructure and other fiscal and physical considerations between the parties.
- G. Designated growth areas shall be complimented by policies, zoning provisions and other mechanisms and ordinances that serve to protect open space, farmland and sensitive environmental habitat among other features and uses. Growth shall be directed away from public water supply watersheds, core and connected wildlife habitat areas, scenic vistas, historic and cultural resources of local state and national significance, agricultural areas and such other

areas and features as may be deemed worthy and appropriate of protection from development by a locality.

- H. The following characteristics shall be considered in designing and designating growth areas:
 - a. mixed-use neighborhoods, including mixed housing types and values potentially accommodating all income levels of residents and workers in the community;
 - b. integration of residential, retail, office and commercial development with recreation facilities, public spaces, parks and open spaces;
 - c. a built environment that encourages and accommodates people living, shopping, visiting, enjoying or spending time in the core area;
 - d. public infrastructure including utilities, services, schools, parks and similar facilities;
 - e. bicycle and pedestrian-friendly road design;
 - f. interconnection of new local streets with existing local streets and roads;
 - g. design features that accommodate and prepare for an aging population within the community;
 - h. accommodation of alternative transportation options reducing the dependency on automobiles, and ultimately reducing vehicle trips and/or vehicle miles traveled per day;
 - i. interconnectivity of neighborhoods with safe road and pedestrian networks;
 - j. preservation of environmentally sensitive areas;
 - k. satisfaction of requirements for stormwater management, especially through the use of innovative and low impact techniques such as bioretention areas, rain gardens, gravel wetlands, and pervious pavements;
 - l. use of high performance building design that incorporates sustainable energy sources such as solar, wind, or thermal energy;
 - m. buildings, spaces and infrastructure of human scale;
 - n. encourage opportunities to redevelop existing unused and underutilized development;
 - o. vehicular parking accommodated without dominating the streetscape or landscape;
 - p. reduced front and side yard building setbacks; and
 - q. reduced subdivision street widths and turning radii at subdivision street intersections.
- I. Each designated growth areas shall contain compact centers supported by sufficient density allowed as a matter of right within approximately one-half mile to permit each center generally to be walkable in its entirety by residents and employees when considering topography and other constraints.
- J. Each locality establishing a designated growth area shall establish community level of service standards for the provision of public services within the designated growth area and may also choose to set standards for one or more areas outside of the designated growth area. The levels of service that may be considered within designated growth areas include percentage of school children who can safely walk to school, public safety and law enforcement response times, proximity of library facilities to residents, percentage of residents and employees who can safely walk to an active recreation facility, walking proximity of commercial enterprises and medical and professional services to residents and employees, and similar spatial and temporal standards related to the community characteristics noted in paragraph H above. The established level of service standards shall be reflected in the locality comprehensive plan.

- K. The Commonwealth Transportation Board shall give priority to the funding of new and expanded transportation and transit infrastructure from state and federal programs to projects and needs within the locality-designated growth areas.
- L. The extent and boundary of the designated growth areas shall be reviewed at least once every 5 years and adjusted as needed to ensure that at least a 20-year planning horizon is maintained; establishing an additional designated growth area in lieu of expanding an existing growth area may be considered if community conditions warrant.
- M. Localities that use proffers, impact fees or other development exactions may tailor their systems such that development within designated growth areas is strongly favored over development outside of designated growth areas through such mechanisms as differential rates and preferred public investment in these areas.