



## COMPREHENSIVE PLAN/ZONING AUDIT: Loudoun County Equine Alliance

Use form to provide key audit information: 1) Review both the 2001 and 2019 Comp Plan to note policy gaps and issues not addressed. 2) Review three ordinance documents (Zoning, FSM, LSDO) to determine existence or levels of enforcement for policies/issues. Use Section (§) references where applicable. 3) Describe Issue and Recommendations. Links to key documents: [2019 Comp Plan](#), [2001 Comp Plan \(RGP\)](#), [CPAM Revisions to the 2001 RGP](#), [Facilities Standards Manual \(FSM\)](#), [Land Subdivision & Development Ordinance \(LSDO\)](#).

1. Comp Plan Policy or Issue Area (2001 & 2019)	2a. Zoning Ordinance § Reference or N/A (Brief text or summary)	2b. Facilities Standards Manual § Reference or N/A (Brief text or summary)	2c. Land Subdivision & Dev. Ordinance § Reference or N/A (Brief text or summary)	3. Issue Description / Recommendations
Smaller parcels and permitted uses in TPA and RPA. Matrix 3.1A and 3.2A	Table 2-1402 (TPA-0) Table 2-100 and 102 (A1) Table 2-200 and 202 (A2) Table 2-302 (A10) Section 6-1300			<p><b>DESCRIPTION:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The impact that scale, use, intensity and design that permitted uses has on adjacent existing properties are not considered. Potential for incompatibility increases as parcel size decreases.</li> <li>Compatibility with surrounding land uses and impact of a project on surrounding parcels, and “the potential for a deleterious impact upon the health, safety, and welfare of the public” (ZO Section 6-1300) are stated goals of the Special Exception and Minor Special Exception processes.</li> <li>Poor definitions of permitted uses allow for loopholes.</li> </ul> <p><b>RECOMMENDATIONS:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider making more minor special exceptions or special exceptions or a process that must account for existing surrounding businesses and properties.</li> </ul>
TPA: chap. 1 Policy 1 strategy 1.1 E. Continue to support agricultural related businesses including equine uses, agritourism, commercial nurseries and similar uses throughout the TPA				<p><b>DESCRIPTION:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This strategy was not included in Chapter 7 of the Comp. Plan where actions relating to Zoning are outlined and therefore risks being ignored in the ZOR.</li> </ul> <p><b>RECOMMENDATIONS:</b> Consider the impact of development on agricultural uses before making zoning changes.</p>
Cluster and by-right Principal/subordinate subdivisions	AR1 P66 and 60 AR2 P89 and 94 Section 2-100	Traffic P34 and 37	Defers to zoning ordinance	<p><b>DESCRIPTION:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>CLUSTER SUBDIVISIONS</b> have had a profound impact on the equine industry in Loudoun County by permitting greater density of residential development, particularly in the AR-1 area. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The equine industry is an agricultural “hybrid” that relies on open space for riding, and suitable soils and land mass for grazing and the ability of “traditional” agriculture (in particular the growing of hay) to support the feeding of animals at affordable prices.</li> <li>At the same time, the horse industry is an important component of the burgeoning “agritourism” business in Loudoun County, by adding tourism dollars through equestrian events.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

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				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>RESIDENTIAL DENSITIES</b> allowed by the Cluster Subdivision Options in both AR-1 and AR-2 have encouraged suburban housing developments that are incompatible with rural uses, including the horse industry, have driven the price of farm land up, squeezing out both equine and crop-growing uses. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The “rural economy” lots in cluster subdivisions are, in practice, rarely suitable for horse ownership.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>OPEN SPACE PERMITTED USES</b> in cluster subdivisions allow for “Bona fide agriculture, horticulture, animal husbandry and structures accessory to such use, including, but not limited to barns and run-in sheds to house livestock or farm equipment” (Section 2-100 5A) but also allow for many uses that are incompatible with agricultural uses (such as sewage pumping stations and stormwater management facilities) and in practice, are not used for the “bona fide agriculture, horticulture, animal husbandry” as described in the ZO.</li> <li>• According to the FSM, <b>PRIVATE ROADWAYS WITHIN CLUSTER SUBDIVISIONS</b> of more than eight lots are not required to be paved (Category C Roadways, FSM Section 4.330). However, in practice new cluster subdivisions pave their roads to appeal to buyers seeking a suburban style. Paved roads are incompatible with equestrian uses, and are another example of how cluster subdivisions discourage equine uses of the “rural economy” lots within them.</li> </ul> <p><b>RECOMMENDATIONS:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>The County should conduct a study</b> of the impact of cluster and principal/subordinate subdivisions on the rural economy, specifically the economic loss of prime agricultural soils and land mass which are necessary for traditional and equine agriculture.</li> <li>• The study should be data driven to determine which of many possible solutions for modifying the zoning ordinance, facilities standards and land subdivision development ordinance best achieve these goals.</li> <li>• The cost of services and public infrastructure must be included in any comparison that increases housing density.</li> <li>• Furthermore, any subdivision or rezoning plan should require land proffered to the county for development of a county wide multi-user natural surface trail system</li> </ul>

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Rural Roads 2019 Countywide Transportation Plan (developed in conjunction with the 2019 Comp. Plan Chapter 3, page 28)				<p><b>DESCRIPTION:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The 2019 Countywide Transportation Plan (CTP) indicates a desire to protect Loudoun’s unpaved roads, noting their “...natural traffic-calming effect that permits their shared use for horseback riding and hiking and contributes to the quality of life sought by rural residents.</li> <li>They are recognized as adding to the rural character that attracts tourists.</li> <li>They also facilitate the safe, efficient movement of farm vehicles.</li> <li>The County is committed to the preservation of a safe unpaved rural road network.” (Chapter 3, page 28.)</li> <li>The increased residential density resulting from cluster subdivisions, which are sometimes located on unpaved roads, poses a serious threat to this resource, which is important to the equestrian community, to agriculture, and to tourism.</li> <li>Furthermore, paved cluster roads are incongruous with the unpaved rural roads from which the originate.</li> </ul>
Side walks	Not addressed	P59/60		<p><b>DESCRIPTION:</b> The ZO mandates sidewalks only if necessary to aid in traffic calming. VDOT requirements are for impermeable surfaces.</p> <p><b>RECOMMENDATIONS:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sidewalks and or trails be mandatory in all paved subdivisions.</li> <li>Especially in the TPA and RPA sidewalks should be of a permeable nature to more closely align with the rural character and allow for additional user groups (equestrians).</li> <li>Guidelines exist and are utilized by other jurisdictions for building permeable ADA compliant sidewalks that can be more easily used by additional groups (equestrians, dog walkers) and are more ecologically friendly, no more costly to build and are less costly to maintain (see <a href="https://elcr.org/?s=TRAIL+Design+in+urban">https://elcr.org/?s=TRAIL+Design+in+urban</a> ).</li> </ul>
TPA and RPA trails master plan TPA chapter strategy 1.1 3 and 4 and policy 2.1 A master plan for trails. RPA strategy 3.2E	See clusters	P60 Nature or recreational trails... shall not substitute for sidewalks or trails that are part of the NUCS.		<p><b>RECOMMENDATIONS:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sidewalks should be permeable where applicable (see above) and should connect with all “shared use” paths.</li> <li>Shared use paths should be multi-user to include equestrians, bicycles and walkers and sidewalks should become multi-use (equestrian, pedestrian and bicycle) within the TPA and RPA.</li> <li>Trail systems apart from sidewalks should be mandated as easements deeded to the county to facilitate creation of a county wide park and trail system (LPAT) within any new subdivision and can be counted as part of the open space requirement. This mandate should follow whenever developers utilize the cluster option or any option that increases density from the base density by-right of 10-40 acres (TPA10, AR1, AR2).</li> </ul>

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Rezoning considerations				<p><b>RECOMMENDATIONS:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Any request to rezone should have an automatic proffer of land deeded to the county that is suitable for extending a county wide trail system (LPAT).</li> <li>Any subdivision of land increasing density over existing zoning shall include the proffer of land deeded to the county for extending a county wide trail system (LPAT).</li> </ul>
Water		Section 6.212		<p><b>DESCRIPTION:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The FSM covers procedures for hydrogeologic testing to “provide evidence that the hydrogeologic system is capable of furnishing and sustaining the potable water needs of the proposed development” (FSM Section 6.212), but does not consider the effect of subdivision development on surrounding properties relying on the same aquifer for water.</li> <li>As a result, new cluster subdivisions have resulted in insufficient well capacity in surrounding areas.</li> <li>Horse farms and farms in general have an additional need for water, beyond what is required to support a household.</li> </ul>