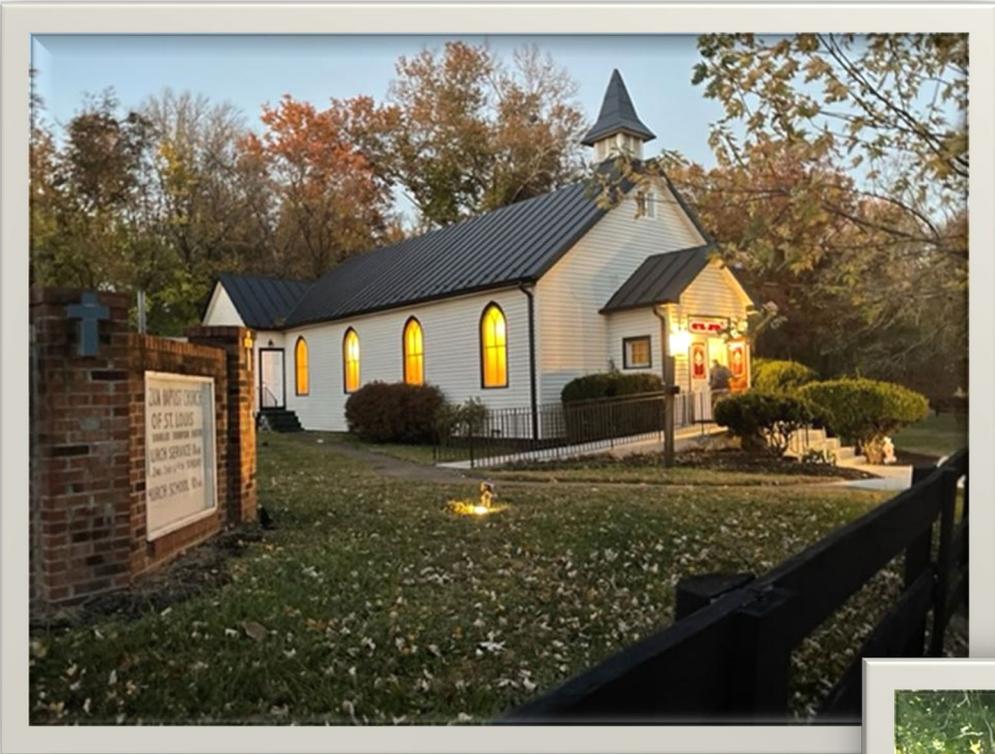


# St. Louis Village Plan CPAM-2022-0001

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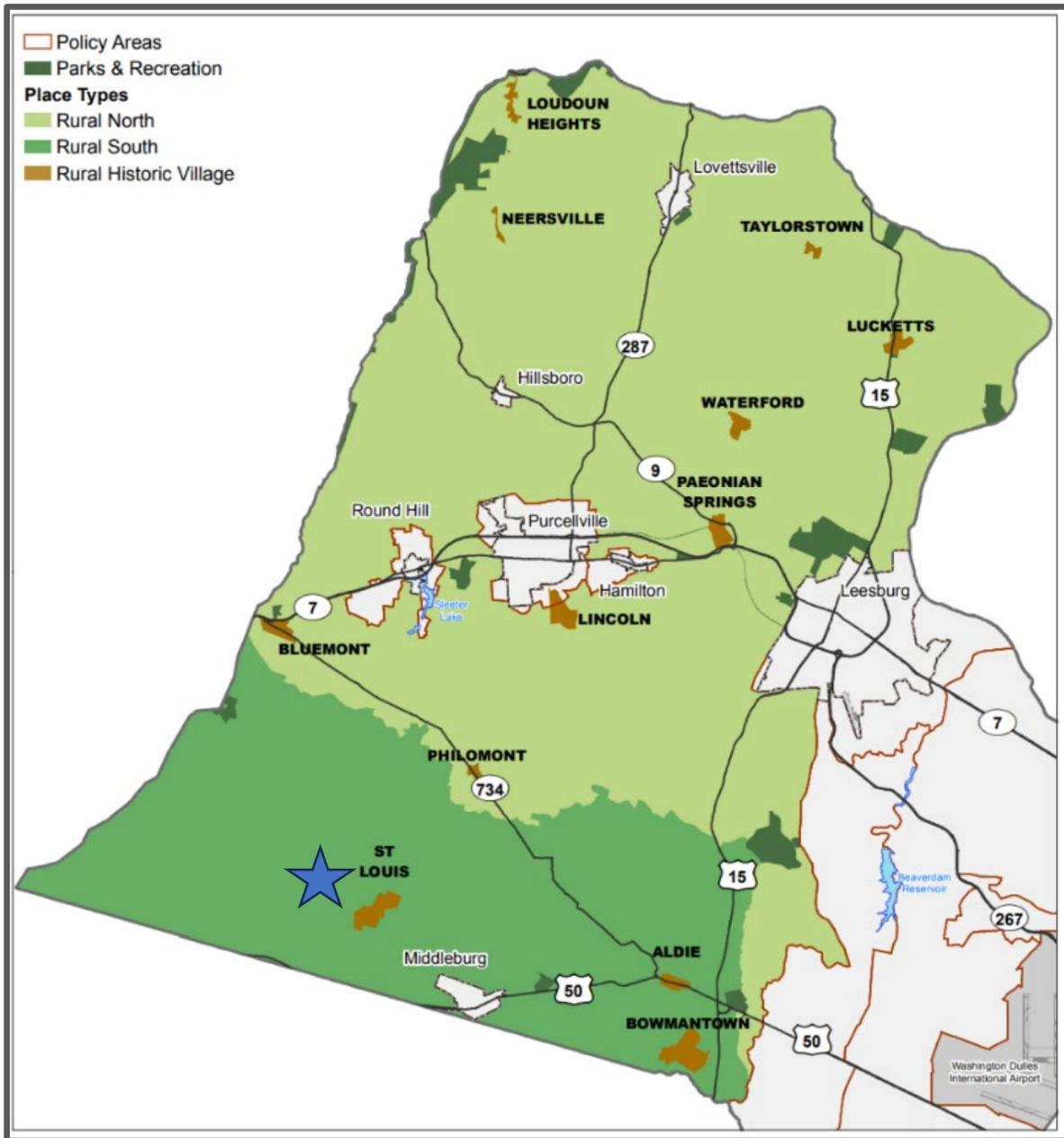




*Photograph from Virginia Department of Historic Resources, #053-5099-0010*



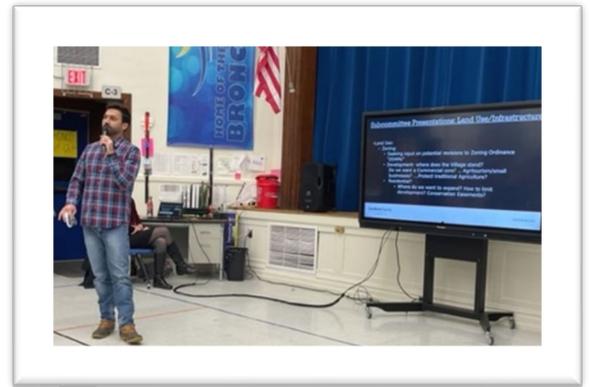
*Students at Banneker Elementary before 1968, courtesy of Tootie Warner.*



Loudoun's Rural Historic Villages, *Loudoun County 2019 General Plan*.

# I. INTRODUCTION:

## St. Louis Village Plan Task Force



St. Louis Task Force Member:	Seat:
Alex Perez, Chair	At-Large
Tootie Warner, Vice Chair	Banneker School
Tamara Gifford	At-Large
Catherine Holmes	At-Large
Marcus Randolph Howard, <i>now deceased</i>	Mt. Zion Baptist Church
Lori Kimball	Black History Committee
Lauren Matusiak	At-Large
Sharon Peterson	At-Large
Madeline Skinner	Loudoun Historic Villages Alliance



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**Loudoun County Staff Support:**

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Karen Guillen	Department of Equity and Inclusion
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Quinchela Dent Hess	Public Affairs and Communications
Mary Frances Forcier	Public Affairs and Communications
<b>Extension Services:</b>	
Stuart Vermaak	Extension Services Director
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Scott Fincham	Environmental Program Specialist

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## **Preamble**

The St. Louis Village Plan (Village Plan) is the result of community engagement and outreach led by the St. Louis Task Force members that will implement the direction of the Board of Supervisors (Board) to create a policy framework to address land use and infrastructure issues in this rural historic village that has experienced underrepresentation and has reached a critical moment of change. Change must be enacted thoughtfully and carefully to allow for managed growth and infrastructure improvements in a manner that is sensitive to the historic built environment, for both generational residents and newer property owners alike. Increased residential development has been a major challenge facing the Village of St. Louis, and residents have expressed concern that the potential for continued development will further threaten their fragile infrastructure, identified as water quality and quantity, and a rural road network with increased traffic. Many residents can trace their ties to the Village through their ancestors who first settled the area.

The Village Plan seeks to provide an inclusive plan for managed growth and historic preservation that honors the founding families and provides the quality of life for all residents that is special to rural historic villages in Loudoun County. The Village Plan will be an addendum to the 2019 Loudoun County Comprehensive Plan (2019 GP), as it will be adopted by Comprehensive Plan Amendment (CPAM), which is a formal public process to amend the 2019 GP.

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## ST. LOUIS VILLAGE PLAN *EQUITY STATEMENT*

The St. Louis Village Plan Task Force strives to implement the following equity statement:

The Village of St. Louis represents a vital chapter in Loudoun County's unique story. Its historical significance, as one of the first African American townships in the County, showcases the enduring spirit of its residents who have enriched our county with their heritage, culture, and traditions. The Village of St. Louis stands as a testament to the strength of our community and the diverse tapestry that makes Loudoun County truly exceptional.

The Village Plan for St. Louis is committed to equity. The tenants of equity aim to identify and remove barriers that create disparities in access to resources, and the achievement of fair treatment and equal opportunities for all individuals while striving to ensure that all community members have opportunities to fully experience optimal well-being and quality of life. It is acknowledged that past efforts in St. Louis did not reach this outcome, as the community continues to experience fundamental issues with access to basic needs such as utilities, appropriate corrective actions, representation, and support.

The St. Louis Village Plan aligns with Loudoun County's Equity Resolution, which is rooted in a commitment to building a prosperous, inclusive, equitable, and sustainable community where all residents have the freedom to "live, work, learn, and play." Equity, in this context, signifies a deep-seated dedication to promoting fairness and justice in the formation of priorities, policies, and programs. The Village Plan reflects the belief that true equity is realized when every individual can fully participate in the County's economic vitality, contribute to its readiness for the future, and connect to the region's assets and resources.

The four main facets of the Village Plan include:

- **Water/Natural Resources:** By providing data collection related to water quality, availability, and sustainability for current and future residents, we seek to ensure access to safe and abundant drinking water in St. Louis. It may also become incumbent upon the County to ensure impacts from future land development does not jeopardize groundwater recharge or drinking water for current residents.
- **History/Heritage/Culture:** Through the identification, documentation, preservation, and celebration of our rich history, we seek to be more reflective of our diverse community and the importance of St. Louis, and all historically African American communities, to Loudoun County. Efforts to educate the public about the history of St. Louis and to achieve honorific historic designations will further this initiative.
- **Infrastructure:** Through traffic studies and community surveys, we have identified needs related to safety, recreation, walkability, quality of life, and connectivity and seek to provide community resources for St. Louis as identified in the 2019 Loudoun County Comprehensive Plan recommendations for Rural Historic Villages.

- **Land Use/ Development:** To address the specific needs of St. Louis, we propose creating a new zoning district as the most appropriate recourse to incorporate the preservation and maintenance of St. Louis’ historic fabric, while enabling longtime residents and their families to remain in St. Louis, while also allowing managed growth that does not negatively impact water quality and quantity.

The Task Force acknowledges diversity, equity, and inclusion as a crucial foundation of Loudoun County’s vision of a more prosperous, inclusive, equitable, and sustainable community where all feel free to live, work, learn, and play.

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## II. INTRODUCTION TO THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AMENDMENT FOR THE ST. LOUIS VILLAGE PLAN

### Background

The *Loudoun County 2019 Comprehensive Plan* (2019 GP) specifically identifies Loudoun’s twelve Rural Historic Villages and highlights their unique importance (Chapter 2, Land Use: Rural Policy Area; Rural Historic Villages). Furthermore, the 2019 GP states, the County shall: “Work with Rural Historic Villages to develop community plans that will support their community goals and address issues related to land use and zoning; economic development; natural, environmental, and historic resources; community facilities and services; water and wastewater; and transportation to maintain the character of the villages (Rural Historic Villages Policy 1: Strategy 1.1, Action B).”

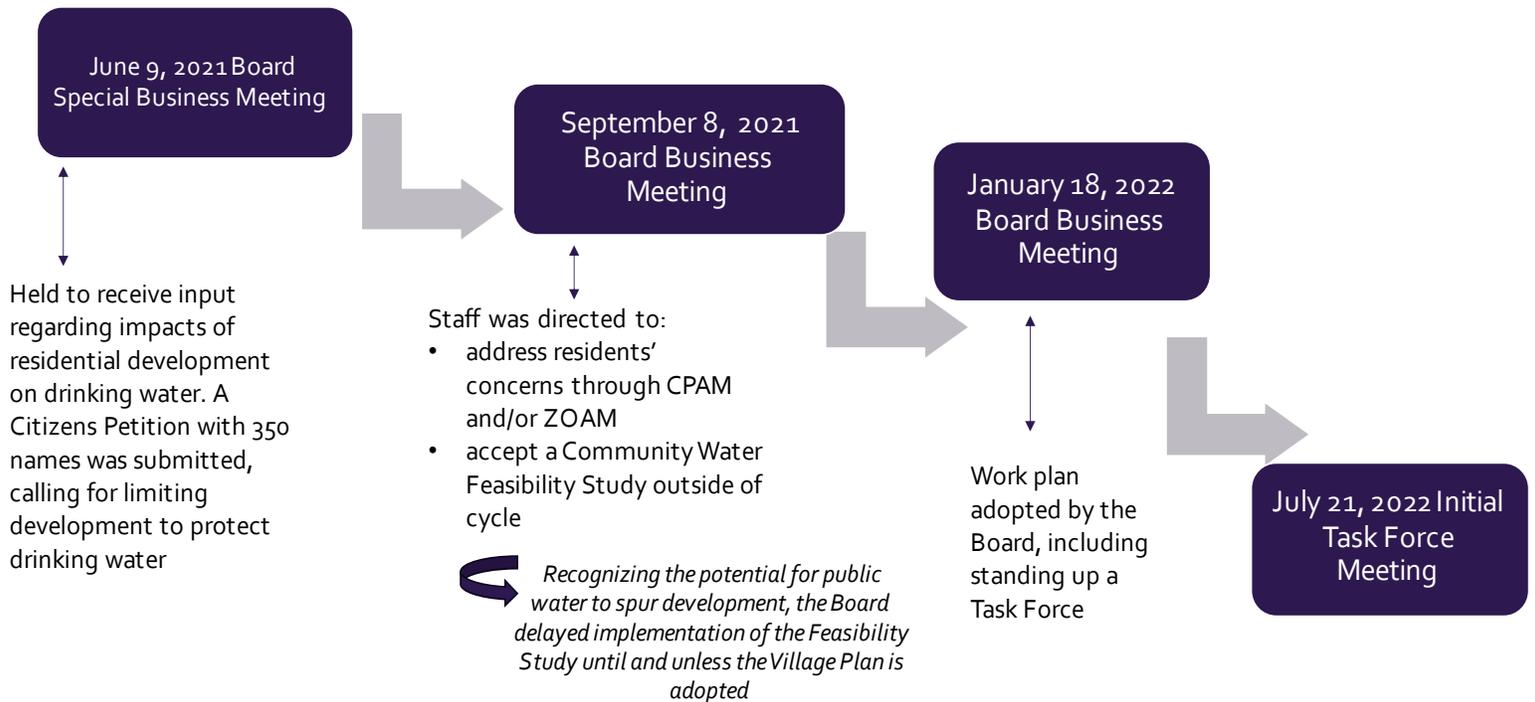
Located in the 2022 Little River Election District and in the Rural Policy Area, the Village of St. Louis is among the twelve Rural Historic Villages designated and mapped in the 2019 GP. Acknowledging the distinctive history and character of each Rural Historic Village, the 2019 GP recognizes that settlement patterns, residential density, building setbacks, building styles, and streetscapes vary and reflect the historic growth and character of the individual villages. In addition to the Rural Historic Village designation in the 2019 GP, St. Louis is also one of thirteen historically African American communities identified and included in the map of African American Historic Communities developed in 2004 with the Thomas Balch Library’s Black History Committee (BHC). At the January 18, 2022, Board of Supervisors Business Meeting, the Board adopted a work plan for the St. Louis CPAM which included appointing a Task Force.<sup>1</sup>

In preparation for the Village Plan, an existing conditions report was prepared by staff and the St. Louis Village Plan Task Force (“Task Force”). The Task Force held its first meeting on July 21, 2022, and continued to meet monthly over a duration of 18 months to establish baseline conditions, collect data, conduct community surveys, review existing policy, and determine overarching policy direction for the St. Louis Village Plan.

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<sup>1</sup> The CPAM-2022-0001 St. Louis Village Plan Work Plan can be found [here](#).

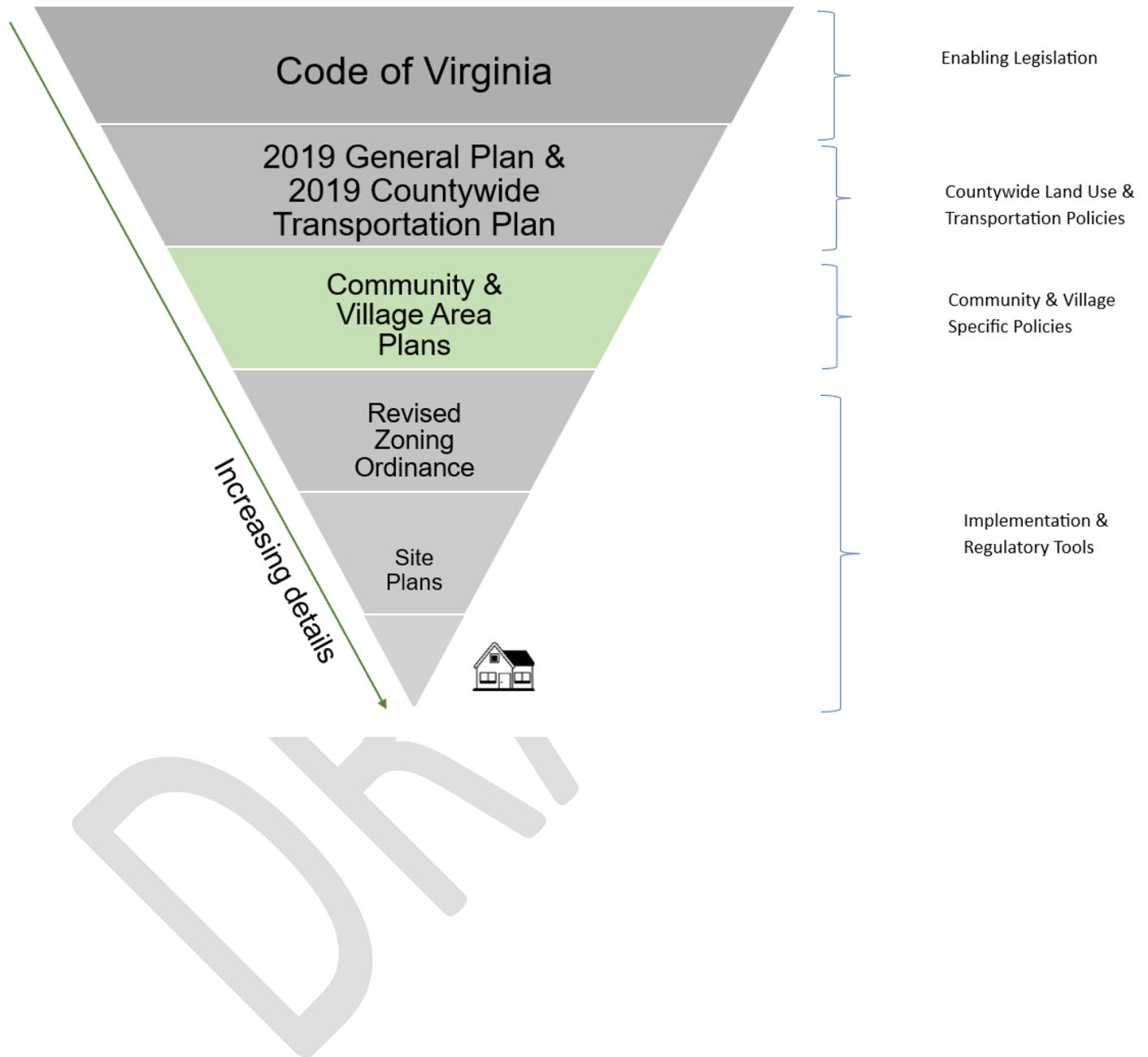
# Board of Supervisors Actions on St. Louis



## Relationship to Other Planning Documents

The 2019 GP references County planning documents that are complementary appendices to the 2019 GP, including area management plans and corridor plans. The St. Louis Village Plan will be among these supplemental appendices once adopted.

# Loudoun County Government Hierarchy of Guiding Documents



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### III. EXISTING CONDITIONS

As stated previously, an in-depth existing conditions report was prepared by staff and the Task Force which provides greater detail and is available on the County's St. Louis Village Plan webpage.<sup>2</sup> Included below is an overview of the existing conditions in St. Louis that has informed the Village Plan's strategy and content.

#### The Community of St. Louis

St. Louis, the largest of the historically African American villages in Loudoun County, was formally settled beginning in 1873 when William H. Hibbs sold property to some of his formerly enslaved people, including Ellzey Valentine, Charles and Squire Robinson, and a large Howard extended family. A second wave of settlement was in 1881 when Thomas Glascock began selling twenty-dollar, one-acre lots to his former enslaved individuals, and to the former enslaved of the Carters, Dulanys, and Gochnauers. In the 1880s, local plantation owner William H. Benton also sold considerable quantities of land to African Americans, including to Garner Peters, Charles and James McQuay, Carter Styles, and Reverend Wormley Hughes.



*The original Hamlin School, courtesy of Tootie Warner; the Hamlin School today as a residence.*

By the 1940s, Loudoun's African American families had been advocating for many years for better education and facilities for their children. St. Louis proudly welcomed the construction of the Banneker School in 1948, which was to serve African American children in the Village as well as from nearby towns such as Middleburg and Marble Quarry.<sup>3</sup> The Banneker School integrated in 1968, maintaining its name, despite suggestions to change it the school's name to "Mercer." Due to the opening of the Banneker School, St. Louis continued to see new residential development through the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. This growth was complimentary to the original patterns of the Village and St. Louis maintained its character and community fabric, with a strong focus on Mt. Zion Baptist Church and the Banneker School. In fact, many of the original families associated with the Church and School continue to have children and grandchildren living in the Village. Banneker School is the only public school in

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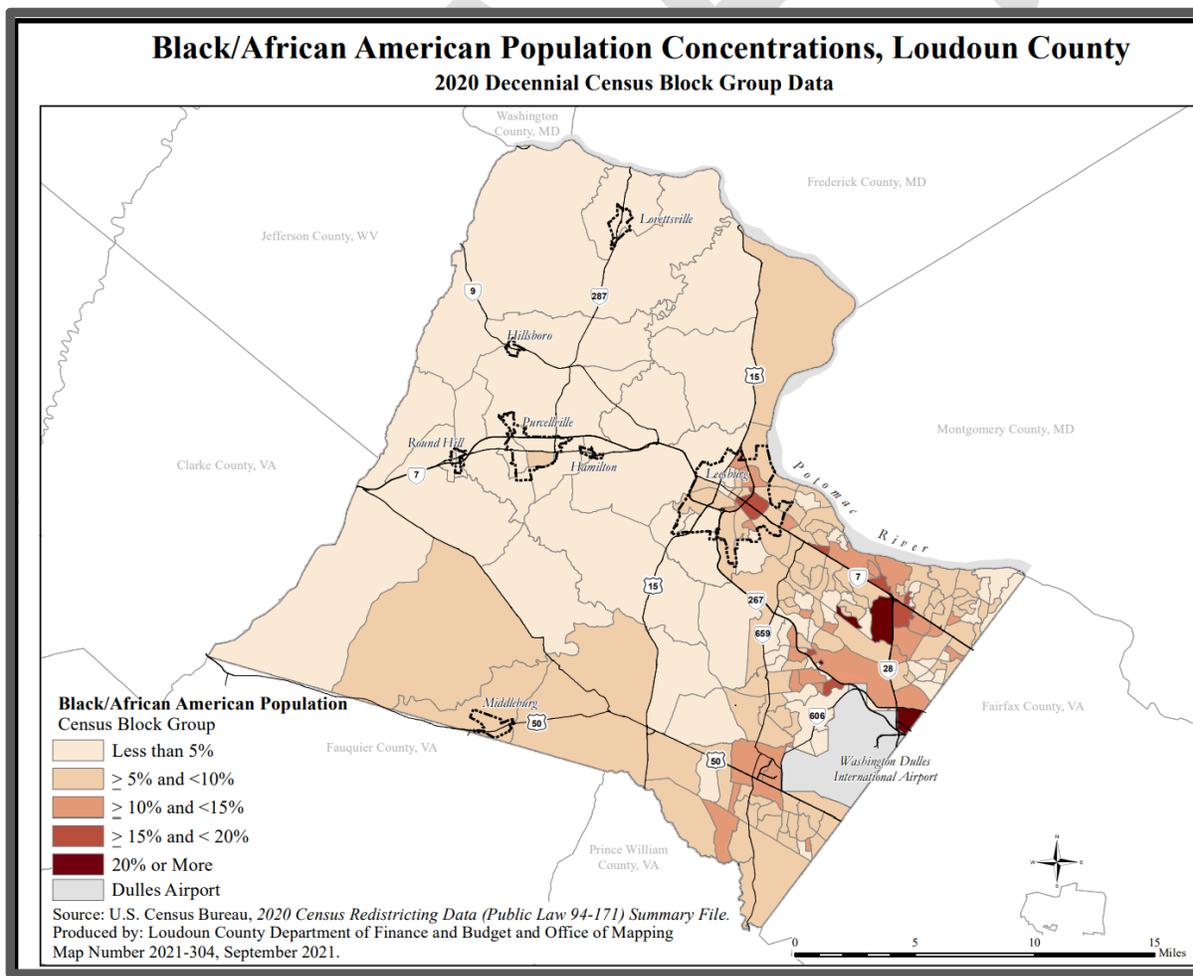
<sup>2</sup> The full Existing Conditions Report can be accessed [here](#).

<sup>3</sup> *St. Louis*, Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Preliminary Information Form, Loudoun County Department of Planning, September 2004.

Loudoun County that was specifically built and opened for African American students during segregation that continues to operate as a public school to this day.

By the close of the 20th century, St. Louis experienced additional residential growth along the traditional boundary of the historic village, including small subdivisions and more extensive equestrian properties. The County created a Sewer Service District in 1981, however well water quality and quantity concerns continue to the present day, potentially resulting from residential growth as well the prevalence of poorly drained soils. While there are some descendants of the original St. Louis founding families still residing in the Village, the composition of the Village includes young families and others looking for rural, smaller, and more affordable housing in a traditional village setting that is safe and attractive, but yet has proximity to amenities.

Banneker Elementary School, the only school within St. Louis Village boundaries, reports that of their student population, 26 percent is designated as economically-disadvantaged. Additionally, the school reports that 65.5 percent of the student body is white and 20.8 percent is Hispanic, with the remaining students identifying as Other.<sup>4</sup> Geographically, St. Louis falls within a large area in the 2020 Decennial Census Block Group Data map zone of a population between 5-10 percent identifying as Black/African American. This zone includes Middleburg and other southern Loudoun towns and communities in addition to St. Louis proper, therefore reporting of demographics is not specific to or reflective of the village. Currently, about 200 residents live in St. Louis.



<sup>4</sup> [LCPS Dashboards-School Profiles](https://dashboards.lcps.org/extensions/Dashboards/SchoolProfiles.html), <https://dashboards.lcps.org/extensions/Dashboards/SchoolProfiles.html>

## Natural Resources



St. Louis is located in the North Fork of the Goose Creek and Upper Goose Creek watersheds. Beaverdam Creek is to the north and Goose Creek runs southeast of the Village. The Village core, where most historic settlement occurred, is surrounded by wooded areas, open fields some of which are in pasture, and gently rolling slopes. Environmental constraints located around the village include floodplain, moderate and/or steep slopes, and stream impairments. There are Countywide Stream Assessment Project data points on Beaverdam Creek that show the stream is good for habitat with one point that shows the stream is severely stressed for aquatic life. For Goose Creek, there are Countywide Stream Assessment Project points that show the stream is good for habitat with one datapoint downstream that shows the stream as stressed for aquatic life.



## Soil Drains in St. Louis Area



## Heritage Resources

While new residential development has taken place, predominantly in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, much of the historic character of St. Louis exists in its original architecture, setting, and development patterns. In 2004, History Matters, LLC, in partnership with the Balch Library's Black History Committee and the Loudoun County Department of Planning and Zoning published the Loudoun County African American Historic Architectural Resources Survey which inventoried St. Louis Village structures. At that time, History Matters, LLC submitted a Preliminary Information Form (PIF) for the Village to the Virginia Department of Historic Resources (VDHR). A PIF is a document that summarizes the known historic significance of a property or properties so that VDHR can determine if a property may be eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places and recommend a full National Register nomination be submitted for review. DHR staff determined that the Village of St. Louis

was eligible for nomination to the National Register (DHR # 053-5099). Currently, only one historically African American community in the County, Willisville, is listed in the National Register as a historic district.

In 2016, a PIF was also completed for Banneker Elementary School. Per the PIF, Banneker is considered potentially eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. To date, neither Loudoun County Public Schools or the property owner, has pursued a formal nomination. In addition to the School, the companion “anchor” for the Village is Mt. Zion Baptist Church with its 1929 chapel and circa 1890 dining hall auxiliary building. There has been both a church congregation and a school building in one location or another in St. Louis since its post-Emancipation settlement. These two structures today, Mt. Zion Baptist Church and Banneker Elementary School, are considered important cultural landmarks, as both institutions were funded and provided by the original residents to serve the needs of the community. In addition to pursuing National Register designation for the Village as an historic district, the community has expressed interest in pursuing individual historic designation for both properties.



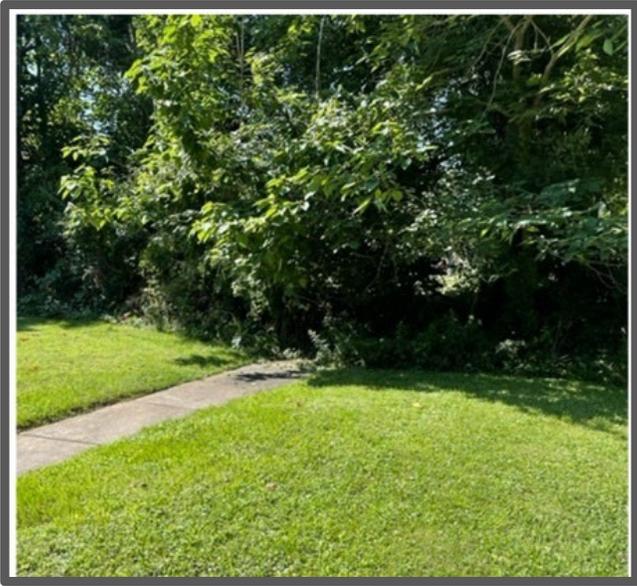
*Mt. Zion Baptist Church and Dining Hall,  
from History Matters, LLC.*





gap in recreational amenities, such as a park or a community meeting space. While Banneker Elementary School could offer amenities for outdoor recreation, inaccessibility from locations across St. Louis Road remains an issue.

The Village contains one section of sidewalk on Newlin Mill Road, which cannot provide pedestrian connectivity as the sidewalk terminates. Otherwise, there are no other distinct, marked pedestrian facilities. Regardless, many residents enjoy walking the unpaved roads and some equestrian-related activities often take place on the roads. Residents have expressed desire to retain these features of village life and provide protection through enhanced safety measures.



The one section of sidewalk in St. Louis, which terminates in an undeveloped lot and fronts one residence.

## Land Use/Development

St. Louis is located within four different zoning districts subject to the *Loudoun County Zoning Ordinance* (Zoning Ordinance): Countryside Residential-1 (CR-1), Countryside Residential-3 (CR-3), Agricultural-3 (A-3), and Rural Commercial (RC). St. Louis is also subject to the Village Conservation Overlay District (VCOD). In addition to the base zoning in the village, the VCOD provides standards for setbacks, yard requirements, building orientation, sidewalks placement among others, to ensure new development within and adjacent to the Rural Historic Village boundary mimics historic village development patterns.

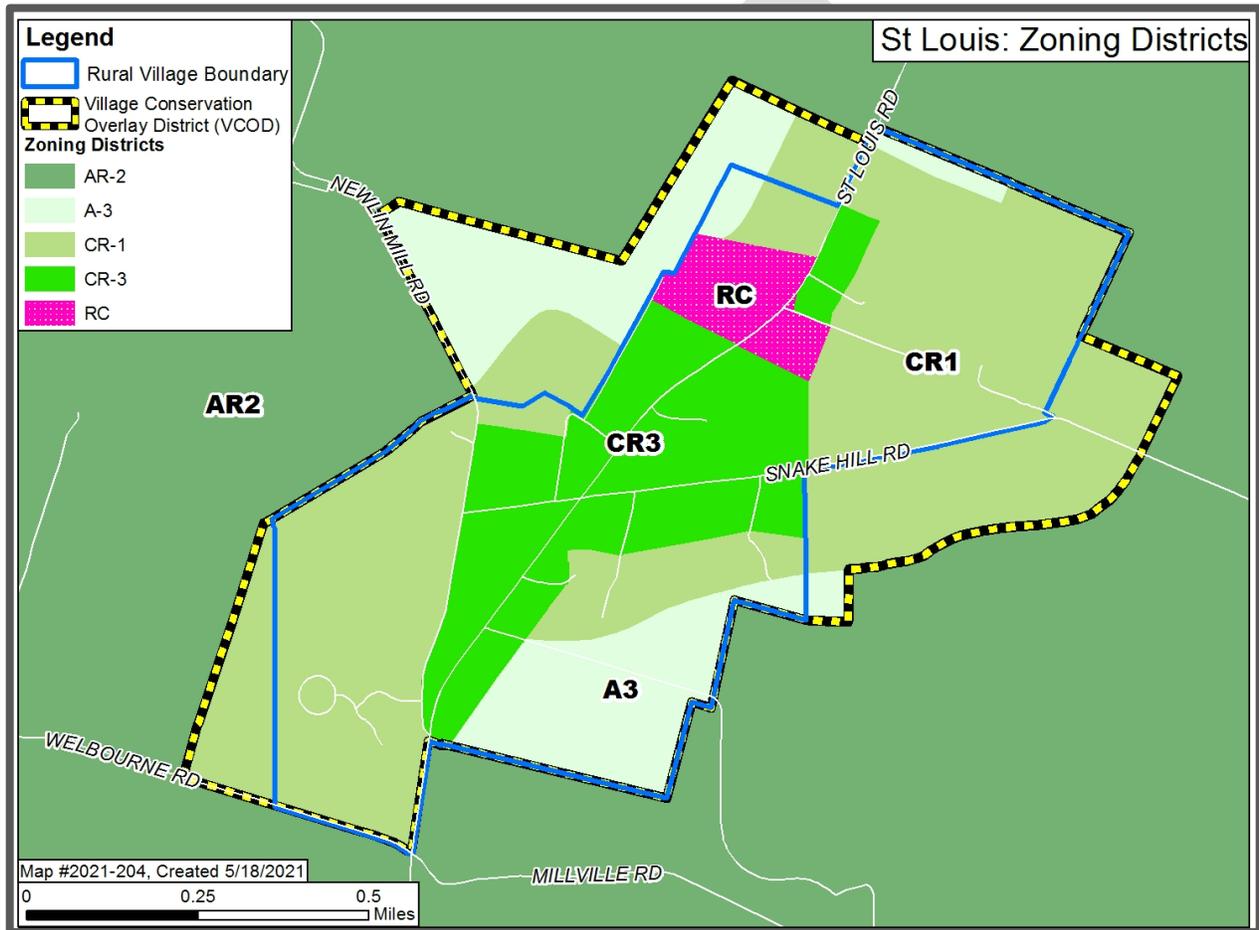
## Current St. Louis Zoning: Parcel<sup>5</sup> Breakouts

- Median acreage: .96322 acres (middle value when sorted least to greatest)
- Mean/Average acreage: 2.934 acres

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<sup>5 5</sup> [Loudoun County Mapping GIS](#), the terms “unit” and “parcel” are used interchangeably in this application.

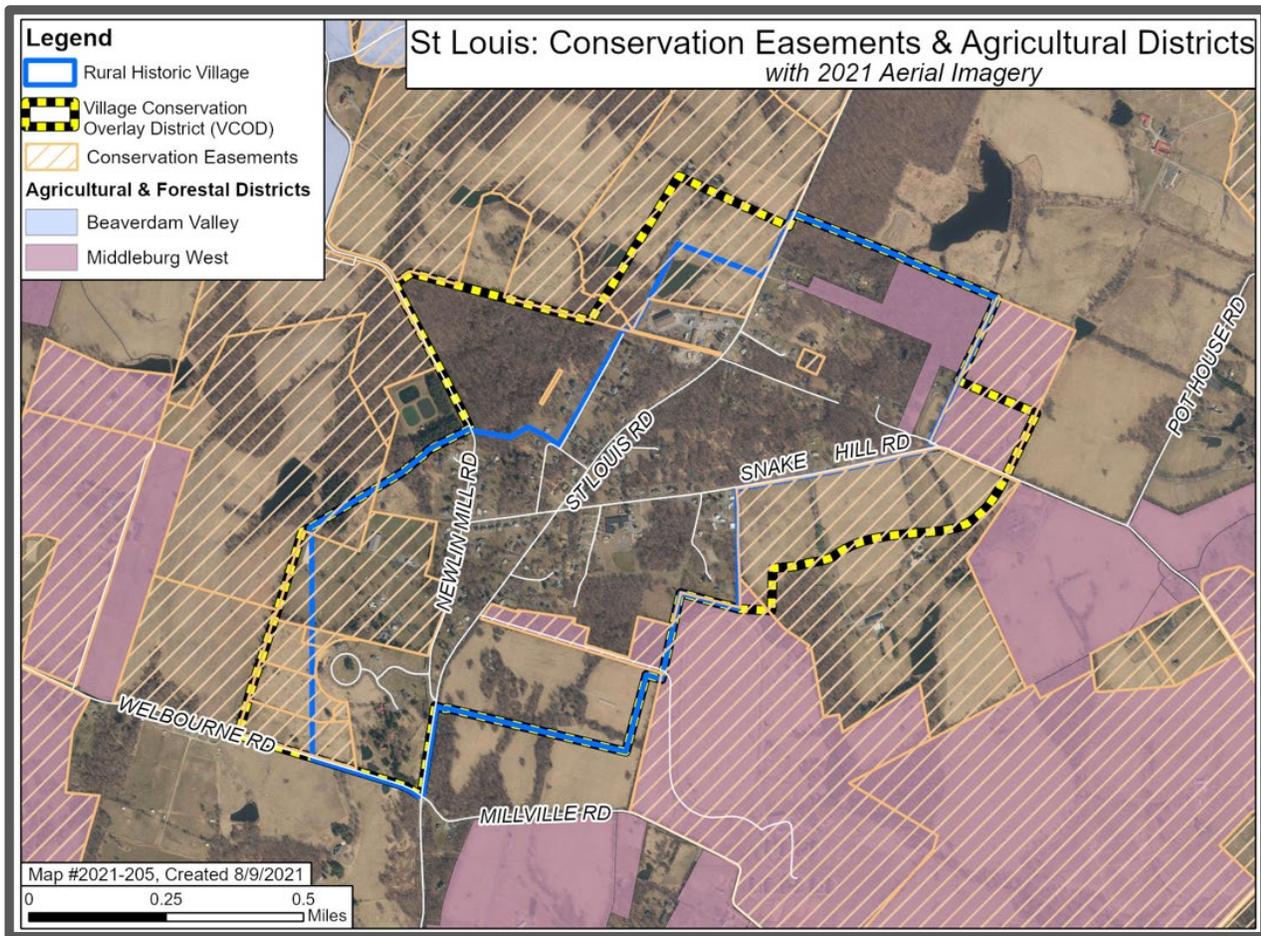
- Parcel size ranges and zoning districts
  - Up to 1 acre: 99 parcels - CR1, CR3, RC
  - 1 to 3 acres: 54 parcels - CR1, CR3, RC, A3
  - 4 to 5 acres: 4 parcels - RC & CR1
  - 5 to 10 acres: 8 parcels - CR1, CR3, RC, A3
  - 10 to 20 acres: 6 parcels - CR1, CR3, A3
  - Above 20 acres: 6 parcels - CR1, CR3, A3



## Development Potential in St. Louis, by Zoning Districts

Zoning District	Development Options	Zoning Ordinance Sec.	Permitted Residential Density	Permitted Uses Table	Notes
<b>CR-1 Legacy District (302.43 ac.)</b>		2.04.03.03		3.02.04	
	Lots Served By On-Site Well and Septic		1 Lot/40,000 SF		40,000 SF Min Lot Size
	Lots Served by Public Sewer/Cluster Option		1 Lot/40,000 SF		20,000 SF Min Lot Size
	Compact Cluster Option		1 Lot/40,000 SF		15,000 SF Min Lot Size
<b>CR-3 Legacy District (108.59 ac.)</b>		2.04.03.03		3.02.04	
	Lots Served By On-Site Well and Septic		1 Lot/40,000 SF		40,000 SF Min Lot Size
	Lots Served by Public Sewer Only		1 Lot/15,000 SF		15,000 SF Min Lot Size
	Compact Cluster Option		1 Lot/15,000 SF		10,000 SF Min to 15,000 SF Max. Lot Size
<b>A-3 Legacy District (108.30 ac.)</b>		2.04.03.02	1 Lot/3Acres	3.02.04	3 Acre Min Lot Size
<b>RC (19.94 ac.)</b>		2.04.03.04	4 DU/Acre	3.02.04	10,000 SF Min Lot Size

The 2019 GP recommends a green buffer around village centers, that can protect viewsheds, village boundaries, and open space. This type of landscape buffer surrounding the village core can be achieved through the implementation of Loudoun County Agricultural and Forestal Districts (AFDs). AFDs help to protect and enhance agricultural and forestal land as an economic and environmental resource. AFDs do this primarily through minimum subdivision requirements. The 2,378 acre Beaverdam Valley AFD is northwest of St. Louis VCOD boundaries. Also, the 4,341, 79-parcel Middleburg West AFD surrounds much of the village, including several parcels inside the village, and was renewed in July 2023 for a four-year period, with a 50-acre minimum subdivision requirement.



During the community outreach meetings, residents mentioned the presence of unmaintained homes and a lack of recourse to require property owners to remove junk and abandoned vehicles from yards that are visible from the street. Attendants further expressed concern that certain historic properties are subject to neglect that could result in demolition or vandalism, with negative impacts on neighboring properties due to unsightliness and unwanted wildlife. Therefore, the community requested help in requiring property owners to maintain their properties to a certain standard, and potentially achieving this through a new zoning district or overlay if appropriate.

## IV. INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY OF THE ST. LOUIS VILLAGE PLAN

### Community Process



*The St. Louis Village Plan Task Force presenting its focus areas to the attendees at a community meeting.*

Three community meetings were hosted at Banneker Elementary for residents and property owners to interact with the Task Force and County staff regarding issues in St. Louis and to gauge support and receive input. To formally confirm community support for the Village Plan policy direction, members of the Task Force personally distributed surveys and offered multiple methods for returning them: ballot box style on the porch of Mt. Zion Baptist Church, by U.S.P.S mail, or via the County's website.

The St. Louis Village Plan reaffirms the existing policies of the 2019 GP, in particular by restating the *Policies – Strategies – Actions* format to demonstrate how the proposed policies of the Village Plan implement existing actions. The Task Force initially created subcommittees to focus on specific issues and then began to draft specific Village Plan policy sections associated with those issues. Issue areas were defined based on input garnered at community meetings and from resident surveys. Four specific areas were identified:

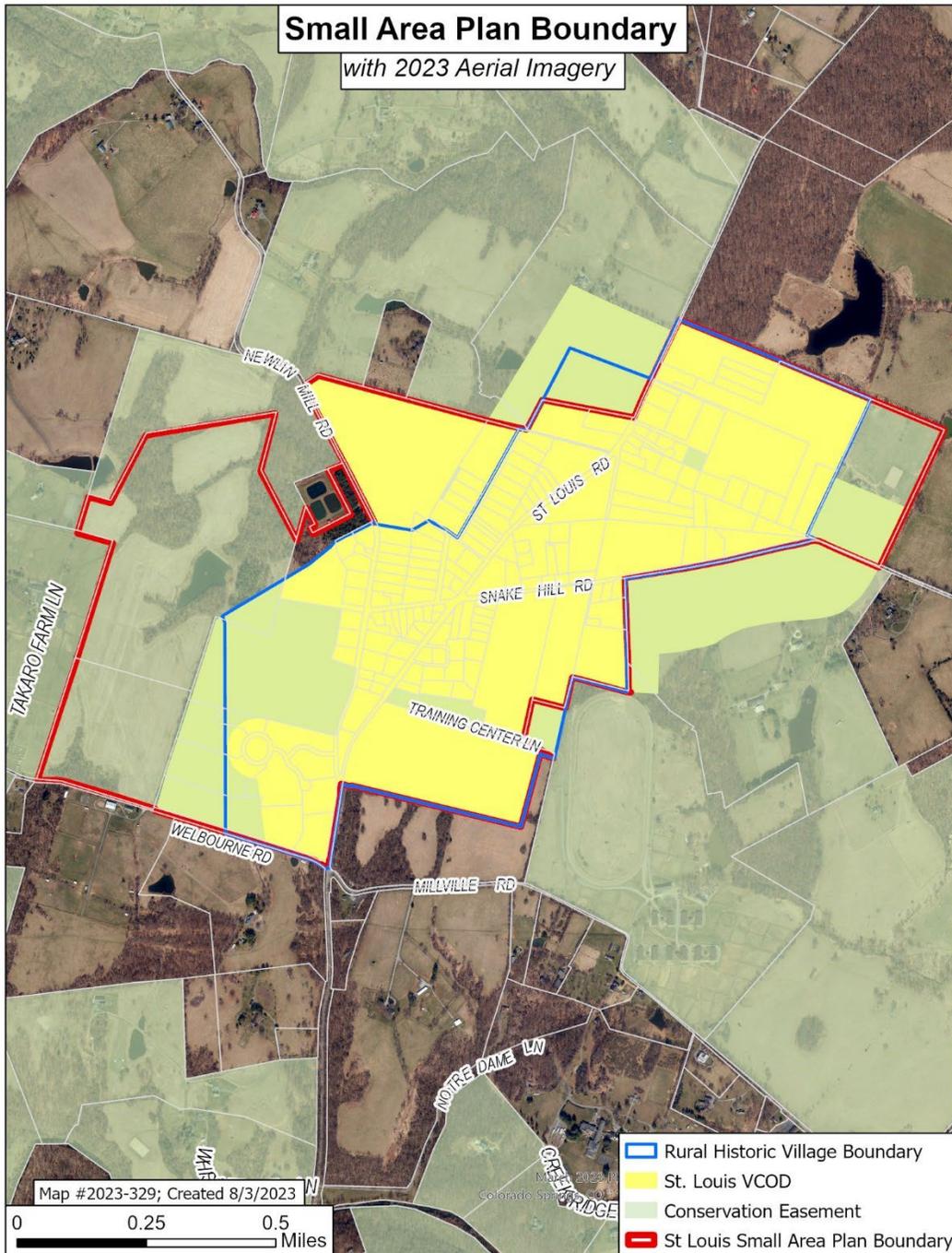
- Water/Natural Resources
- History/Heritage
- Infrastructure
- Land Use/Development

Section V of this document is the Task Force’s recommended policies along with detailed action steps for implementation. Within the Village Plan, each policy is framed with background sections that provide context for the Task Force’s policy recommendations. Additionally, the four policy statements include current 2019 GP guidance that provide the initial groundwork for the Task Force’s recommended policies. A summary of the St. Louis Village Plan Task Force’s recommended policies are as follows:

- Water quality and quantity are a primary concern for Village residents. The County shall work with residents to address immediate water issues, allocate necessary resources to underwrite a water feasibility study, and/or provide other measures to ensure safe and adequate water is available to all residents.
- Preserve and educate the public on the distinctive African American cultural history, architecture, and landscape of the Village through honorary historic designation, compatible land use, stewardship, and interpretation.
- Determine if residential growth can be limited through a new zoning district that specifically monitors impacts to ground water recharge areas and drinking water quality/quantity. The new zoning district could also maintain the historic settlement patterns of the Village of St. Louis, while allowing small scale village-appropriate commercial activities within designated areas and allow for the small subdivision of land that would benefit multigenerational families and aging in place.
- Open community discussions regarding a local Historic District zoning overlay that meets the needs of the Village. The interest of the community will need to be gauged.
- Encourage conservation and open space easements in St. Louis.
- Support a safe, multimodal (walking, equestrian, biking, driving) village core with enhanced community spaces.
- Provide solutions to, and identify ongoing traffic complaints of speeding, volume, road conditions, and potential danger to pedestrians.

# MAP OF ST. LOUIS VILLAGE PLAN BOUNDARY

The Task Force adopted an updated boundary map for the Village Plan in July 2023. The rationale for the boundary change was to include parcels that contain historic value, even if the landscape has changed, and areas which encompass newer residential populations considered to be a part of the Village fabric. The Task Force desired to include land that is held in conservation easements that surrounds the Village to act as a buffer.





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## V. THE ST. LOUIS VILLAGE PLAN

### A. Water and Natural Resources

#### Background

An issue of importance to the Task Force is addressing the quantity and quality of water available via private wells in the Village. Residents in the Village continue to report both poor water quality and quantity, which was reportedly exacerbated by the wells drilled in association with the MOJAX development on Snake Hill Road in 2019. The proposed development highlighted past inequities experienced in the Village, including the problematic water quality, lack of recourse for large-scale development negatively impacting existing wells, and the overall impacts to Village residents including increases to property taxes and traffic. The Task Force and DPZ staff recommend that the Department of General Services (DGS) continue to be included in the discussion to provide solutions to the water issue. As such, the Task Force will be able to report on available options and provide recommendations based on community survey results, but the voluntary initiation of further study and process relies on community action. One such option is a community water Feasibility Study. A Feasibility Study was conducted in 1969, which resulted in a community sewer district, but not a community water system. St. Louis resident representation had not been ongoing, which accounts for the community's hesitation in pursuing the community water system, but not a lack of interest. For these reasons, there has been no resolution from past efforts and discussions.

A new water Feasibility Study would inform St. Louis on the existing water supply and quality, with the goal of identifying a need or capability for community water, or alternative mitigation measures. There is an existing public sewer district in the Village. The availability of a community water system is a requisite for residential development in the Countryside Residential-1 (CR-1) and Countryside Residential-3 (CR-3) zoning districts, which encompass both the eastern and western portions of the St. Louis Village Conservation Overlay District, as well as the historic village center. The residential compact cluster development option in these zoning districts requires both public sewer and water. Therefore, a new community water system would pair with the already established sewer service district to enable additional residential development in those districts. Should the community's water Feasibility Study recommend the community water option, this will need to be weighed against stated Village goals of reducing further development. The St. Louis Village Plan CPAM would be adopted prior to any recommendations resulting from the Feasibility Study, and therefore the Village Plan can provide whatever limitations on density are possible through a future zoning amendment.

#### Community Input

Based on the results of the 44 returned community surveys in April 2023, there was overwhelming support for initiating a Water Feasibility Study. Other options, aside from a Feasibility Study, should be further explored

through the Department of Public Affairs and Communications (PAC) and the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), two county agencies coordinating the allocation of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds which could be used to address water issues in the village. The survey results indicate there is interest in a public water system, with limited preference for retaining the existing private wells. A Water Feasibility Study does not guarantee, nor commit, that a community water system can be or will be brought to St. Louis.

## **Existing 2019 General Plan Policies, Strategies, and Actions**

Rural Historic Village (RHV) Policy 1: Development and uses in Rural Historic Villages must be compatible with the historic development pattern, community character, visual identity, intensity, and scale of the individual villages.

### Strategy

1.1 Encourage the retention and development of a variety of compatible residential, commercial, and community uses that enhance the attractiveness and vitality of the Rural Historic Villages.

### Actions

B. Work with Rural Historic Villages to develop community plans that will support their community goals and address issues related to land use and zoning; economic development; natural, environmental, and historic resources; community facilities and services; water and wastewater; and transportation to maintain the character of the villages.

## **St. Louis Village Plan New Policies**

Policy 1: Water quality and quantity is a primary concern of Village residents. The County will work with residents to address water issues, allocating necessary resources to underwrite a water feasibility study, and/or other mitigation measures to ensure safe and adequate water is available to all residents.

### Actions

1. Prioritize a Village application for a Water Feasibility Study to determine existing water conditions, impacts from current and future development, and provide appropriate recommendations that could address quality and quantity issues.
2. Encourage residents who participate in the free individual well testing offered through the Virginia Extension Office to share their results with the Extension Office to document any widespread water quality issues. Continue to offer free individual well testing on an annual basis to monitor conditions.
3. Investigate alternatives for funding individual well water improvements, such as a Board reallocation of ARPA funds towards solutions outside of a Feasibility Study (filtration, re-drilling, etc). Funding should be available beyond the expiration of ARPA funds.

4. Allocate County staff Ombudsman resources for in-person, one-on-one assistance to St. Louis residents in applying for cost relief programs such as the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) housing repair loans, the County's tax relief programs, and other programs that could offset individual water quality improvement measures.
5. Establish a St. Louis community volunteer group to liaise with the initiatives proposed by the Village Plan, including the Water Feasibility Study and individual well testing.
6. Limit residential development, or any other such increases in density, by creating a new zoning district which specifically monitors impacts to water quality, protection of groundwater recharge areas, and the existing residents' well water supply.

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## **B. Heritage Resources**

### **Background**

The Village of St. Louis is one of 13 documented historically African American villages in the County that were formally settled after Emancipation in the later part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. While the majority of these villages have disappeared from the landscape, St. Louis continues to be a growing, vibrant community where descendants of the earliest African American property owners and new residents continue to live, worship and attend school.

During the 2004 African American Historic Architectural Resources Survey by History Matters, LLC, the Village of St. Louis was determined to be potentially eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, however, a nomination has not been prepared or submitted to VDHR to date. Because the PIF for the Village historic district is over 10 years old, VDHR requires the submission of an updated PIF for review before a nomination can be submitted. VDHR has also determined that Banneker Elementary School is eligible for listing in the NRHP. Mt. Zion Church has not been evaluated for listing as an individual property. However, the church is currently considered a “contributing historic property” to the Village of St. Louis Historic District.

A listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) serves to acknowledge and document how the distinctive cultural history and preserved built environment of St. Louis represents a significant contribution to the history of the county, commonwealth, and nation. The designation is honorary and does not regulate how a property is used or maintained.

The BHC, in coordination with faculty and students from George Mason University’s School of Integrated Studies, is currently conducting oral histories with community leaders and descendants of early property owners to document and curate a more dimensional and holistic history of the Village.

### **Community Input**

Based on community feedback and community surveys, there is overwhelming support for National Register historic designations for the Village, church, and school. The Task Force supports continued discussions with the larger community to determine if local historic designation via a zoning overlay could address issues such as demolition by neglect, property maintenance, and compatible infill development.

### **Existing 2019 General Plan Policies, Strategies and Actions**

Rural Historic Village (RHV) Policy 1: Development and uses in Rural Historic Villages must be compatible with the historic development pattern, community character, visual identity, intensity, and scale of the individual villages.

### Strategy

1.2. Preserve the character of the villages and their historic structures and sites through the rehabilitation and adaptive reuse of existing buildings.

### Actions

- A. Promote and support building maintenance and improvements to preserve the existing building stock and the character of the villages.
- B. Evaluate the establishment of additional County Historic Districts in the Rural Historic Villages.

## **St. Louis Village Plan New Policies**

Policy 1: Preserve and educate about the distinctive African American cultural history, architecture, and landscape of the village for current and future generations through honorary historic designation, compatible land use, stewardship, and interpretation.

### Actions

1. Consider properties within and surrounding the Village as priority properties to be included in the County Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) Program.
  - a. Provide educational brochures to Village residents about the process and purpose of the PDR Program.
2. Encourage the use of conservation easements on larger properties as well as assemblages of smaller properties to conserve agricultural land surrounding the Village and reduce future residential development within the Village. This can be facilitated through community meetings to educate and discuss the details and process of easements. A local nonprofit conservation easement holder will be invited to perform a study or inventory of parcels that are currently not in conservation easement, to identify those which have the highest value of conservation/cultural assets, and therefore would be critical pieces of land to encourage protection of.
  - a. Provide brochures that provide information and guidance on how to place an easement on property and benefits.
3. Establish a St. Louis community volunteer group to liaise with the initiatives proposed by the Village Plan, including educating residents on the Village heritage.

4. Support the preservation of existing buildings and homes, discourage demolition by neglect, and prevent displacement by assisting eligible residents in understanding and applying for various home repair and tax exemption programs.
5. Support the improvement of existing buildings and homes by expanding the residential real estate revitalization program to include St. Louis and pursue a new and expanded home repair program for eligible residents.
6. Seek sources of grant funding and allocate County resources to pursue National Register designation for the Village as a historic district, and to designate Mt. Zion Church and Banneker Elementary School as individual historic properties.
7. Interpret and share the unique history of the Village with residents and the public through signage, story maps, narratives, oral histories, and community heritage events. Emphasize the family names and stories of early St. Louis settlers via interpretive signage.
8. Seek opportunities to ensure that residents are educated on the history of their property.
9. Coordinate with and support the BHC's efforts to conduct and curate oral histories of village residents to ensure that first-person histories of the Village are preserved in perpetuity.
10. Open community discussions regarding local Historic District zoning overlay that meets the needs of the village through the prevention of demolition by neglect, the encouragement of property maintenance, evaluating in-fill policies, and historic preservation. The interest of the community will need to be gauged.

### C. Infrastructure

#### Background

St. Louis continues to be an interesting and diverse blend of small village residences either with children who attend Banneker or lifelong residents whose land is abutted by expansive equestrian facilities and farms on the outskirts of the Village. Through surveys, different needs and concerns were expressed by the various demographics residing in the Village. Some of those concerns, including traffic, are commonly shared and widely reported by residents, across all demographics.

#### Internet:

Many residents have inquired about broadband expansion to St. Louis and County staff have relayed that with the Virginia Telecommunication Initiative (VATI) grant, broadband will be made available to residents in the future. This topic is of high concern to residents as a common utility and not as an amenity.

#### Connectivity:

With Banneker Elementary School located in the Village core, residents have stated that connectivity via sidewalks would be welcome. Not all residents agree with the need for sidewalks, as that can create less of a rural village appearance and more suburban-style living. The current VCOD regulations provide that sidewalks *may be* required for new development within a Rural Village if appropriate. Connectivity within the Village – between residences and village amenities – could be addressed in a traffic calming study.

The community has stated interest in the addition of recreational gathering spaces, in particular a passive park or trail. Additional opportunities include community days, such as picnics or celebrations. There is an overall interest in connectivity throughout St. Louis which is bifurcated by St. Louis Road, a 35 miles per hour byway that is not easily crossed on foot. A Traffic Calming Study and/or other efforts may highlight ways to enhance connectivity for the community.

The community as a whole enjoys the quiet, rural, agricultural setting of St. Louis and the ability for horseback riders both in fields and on the roads, dogwalkers, and children riding bikes to the school grounds. Few returned surveys expressed interest in street lighting or other planned neighborhood-style amenities, but with the school as a community anchor, exploring safety and/or accessibility measures may garner widespread support.

#### Community Input

The majority of the returned surveys reflected support for initiating a Traffic Calming Study, which would be performed in conjunction with the DTCL. At the first two Community Meetings hosted by DPZ, many attendees commented in writing that vehicular speeding was a concern and that potholes were left unaddressed, even after citizens made complaints.

Additional support has been demonstrated for entrance signage into St. Louis. There is existing signage which the Task Force believes is too wordy to read while driving on St. Louis Road. Signage, with pull-offs, specifically denoting entry points to the historic Village could serve as a signal to drivers to slow down.

The Village contains unpaved roads, more so on the outskirts leading away from the Village core. Participants at the Task Force’s community meetings have discussed issues with road maintenance as well as asked for information regarding paving or leaving the roads unpaved. The survey results are nearly evenly divided between paving the gravel roads or leaving them gravel. There is a slight majority supporting the gravel roads remaining unpaved and there should be further discussions related to the routine road maintenance of gravel roads. Should the reported issues with drainage and potholes be addressed, the support for keeping the gravel roads may increase as unpaved roads can contribute to reduced driving speeds within the Village.

## **Existing 2019 General Plan Policies, Strategies and Actions**

Rural Historic Village (RHV) Policy 1: Development and uses in Rural Historic Villages must be compatible with the historic development pattern, community character, visual identity, intensity, and scale of the individual villages.

### Strategy

1. Encourage the retention and development of a variety of compatible residential, commercial, and community uses that enhance the attractiveness and vitality of the Rural Historic Villages.

### Actions

- B. Work with Rural Historic Villages to develop community plans that will support their community goals and address issues related to land use and zoning; economic development; natural, environmental, and historic resources; community facilities and services; water and wastewater; and transportation to maintain the character of the villages.
- D. Coordinate with Rural Historic Village communities to determine appropriate methods to differentiate entrances into the villages from surrounding areas, including through street design, landscaping, and building placement.
- E. Incorporate traffic calming measures that are compatible with the village character where appropriate to reduce vehicle speeds and provide a pedestrian-friendly environment.

## **St. Louis Village Plan New Policies**

Policy 1: Support a safe, multimodal (walking, equestrian, biking, driving) Village core with enhanced community gathering spaces, walking paths, and historic interpretive signs that enhance a sense of community.

### Actions

1. Approach property owners of large open parcels within the Village to determine future plans for the land and whether a park could be possible.

2. Engage with Loudoun County Public Schools regarding community use of the Banneker Elementary outside of school operating hours for activities that the community can engage in, such as exercise or art classes, and children's programs. These can be hosted and managed via partnerships with outside organizations.

Policy 2: Provide solutions to ongoing traffic complaints of speeding, volume, road conditions, and danger to pedestrians.

#### Actions

1. Coordinate with DTCI to conduct a Traffic Calming Study to determine safety concerns, pedestrian accessibility, and considerations for paving versus retaining gravel roads.
2. Establish a St. Louis community volunteer group to liaise with the initiatives proposed by the Village Plan, including the Traffic Calming Study.
3. Create additional entry signage into the village that denotes village boundaries and historical significance, and would alert motorists to a new, slower traffic pattern. Pull-offs or designated areas, similar to brick shoulders, for citizens to safely read and access the signs are also recommended.
4. Investigate the feasibility and suitability of installing crosswalks during the Traffic Calming Study phase, so that residents who live on the west of St. Louis Road may avail themselves of walking and biking the Snake Hill Road section of St. Louis as well, but currently cannot safely cross from one area of St. Louis to the other.
5. Prepare an alternative plan for funding sources to install crosswalks, signage pullovers, and other measures that St. Louis has expressed a need for, in the event that a Traffic Calming Study is not conducted.

## **D. Land Use**

### **Background**

In 2019, a proposed residential development, Middleburg Preserve I and II (“MOJAX”), was met with strong community opposition due to concerns about the impact of more than 30 wells on an existing strained water supply, increased traffic on the rural road network, tax increases, well water quality, and the overall change to the historic, rural character of the village the proposed development would have brought. The organized community opposition to the development brought these concerns to the attention of the Board of Supervisors resulting in the current planning effort for the village. The development application was eventually withdrawn, and the assemblage of properties were purchased with the intention of placing them in a conservation easement. Given the current zoning in the village, the potential for additional “by-right” residential development in the village is largely dependent on the ability of a developer to purchase an assemblage of smaller, contiguous properties similar to the case with Middleburg Preserve.

#### 2019 GP designation:

St. Louis is designated as a Rural Historic Village (RHV) in the 2019 GP. The overarching policy governing RHVs is to ensure that future development and land uses are compatible in scale and design with historic development patterns, also called place type, and do not detract from the visual identity of the RHVs. The Rural Historic Village place type encourages communities to maintain and enhance their established, distinctive, and historic building patterns. In the RHVs, residential development densities are up to four dwelling units per acre. The recommended core uses for this place type are single-family detached residential dwelling units and/or retail/service commercial. Complementary uses could include offices, agricultural support uses, and heritage tourism. Conditional uses would include public facilities, accessory dwelling units, and parks.

#### Current Zoning:

The base zoning for St. Louis currently includes Countryside Residential-1 (CR-1), Countryside Residential-3 (CR-3), Agricultural Residential (A-3), and Rural Commercial (RC). Of particular concern for the Task Force within both of the CR-1 and CR-3 zoning districts is the compact cluster development option, which offers the greatest potential for increased density in the village, but requires public water facilities. Public sewer, of course, is already provided in all four of the zoning districts in St. Louis, and if the village elects to initiate a public water system in addition to the existing sewer service district, compact cluster development options become possible in most of the village core.

Though the majority of parcels are considered small, the community has expressed concern that within the boundaries of the VCOD, consolidation of smaller parcels into one larger property could result in higher-density residential development.

Parcel Size Ranges	Number of Parcels within VCOD	Zoning Districts
Up to 1 acre	99 parcels	CR1, CR3, RC
1 to 3 acres	54 parcels	CR1, CR3, RC, A3
4 to 5 acres	4 parcels	CR1, RC
5 to 10 acres	8 parcels	CR1, CR3, RC, A3
10 to 20 acres	6 parcels	CR1, CR3, A3
Above 20 acres	6 parcels	CR1, CR3, A3

Several parcels within the village are zoned Rural Commercial (RC), two of which are owned by VDOT and a few parcels are “split-zoned” meaning they have two zoning districts on one parcel. The RC zoning district permits a variety of retail or commercial uses, in addition to residential uses not to exceed 4 units per acre. St. Louis is also subject to the VCOD.

The 2019 General Plan endorses a green buffer around village centers, protecting viewsheds, village boundaries, and open space. Many larger properties surrounding the village core have been placed under conservation easements and two agricultural districts are proximal to the village already providing an existing “greenbelt” around the current RHV boundary.

### Community Input

There is support for limiting future residential growth in the village. Additionally, a majority of the survey results indicated the exploration of zoning changes to formally restrict or reduce the potential for additional residential development. However, there is strong support for allowing small subdivisions of land (family subdivisions) to allow for generational property ownership and financial planning, and there is support for accessory dwelling units as well. Community interest was evenly split for- and against- a small commercial core in the village.

### Existing 2019 General Plan Policies, Strategies and Actions

Rural Historic Village (RHV) Policy 1: Development and uses in Rural Historic Villages must be compatible with the historic development pattern, community character, visual identity, intensity, and scale of the individual villages.

#### Strategy

- 1.1. Encourage the retention and development of a variety of compatible residential, commercial, and community uses that enhance the attractiveness and vitality of the Rural Historic Villages.

#### Actions

- A. Develop criteria to evaluate existing Rural Historic Villages and other historic crossroads communities, such as Airmont, Bloomfield, Howardsville, Morrisonville, Unison, and Willisville, to determine if their current designation is warranted, define and/or redefine community boundaries as necessary, and amend the Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Ordinance as appropriate.
- B. Work with Rural Historic Villages to develop community plans that will support their community goals and address issues related to land use and zoning; economic development; natural, environmental, and historic resources; community facilities and services; water and wastewater; and transportation to maintain the character of the villages.
- C. Review and revise zoning regulations, design standards, and guidelines to achieve compatible building and street design to ensure that quality development occurs within the Rural Historic Villages.
- F. Evaluate and revise existing Rural Commercial (RC) zoning district regulations to implement Plan policies and design standards for development in the Rural Historic Villages that ensure compatibility with the settlement patterns and neighborhood scale.

1.4. Business and commercial uses in the Rural Historic Villages should be 1) small scale, 2) compatible with existing development patterns, 3) generate limited vehicular traffic, and 4) meet local community needs or support rural tourism.

#### Actions

- A. Adopt zoning regulations, design standards and performance criteria that are specific to the types of small-scale, community-related commercial uses that the County encourages within the Rural Historic Villages.

### **St. Louis Village Plan New Policies**

Policy 1: Maintain the historic settlement patterns of the Village of St. Louis, while allowing small scale village-appropriate commercial activities within designated areas and the small subdivision of land that would benefit multigenerational families and aging in place.

#### Actions

1. Adopt the proposed small area plan map of the St. Louis community boundary and include the map of the area subject to the Village plan within the CPAM. Revise the boundaries of the Rural Historic Village in the 2019 GP to reflect this new community boundary. A Zoning Ordinance Amendment (ZOAM) will be required to revise the current boundary of the VCOD with the proposed St. Louis Village Plan boundary or to surpass it. (*See pages 26, 27*)

2. Define an area in the Village that currently permits small scale commercial uses on parcels currently zoned RC, that would sustain small scale commercial activity, that should adhere to design guidelines that will maintain the community character and rural nature of the businesses. Of particular interest are small-scale food stores similar to those found in Bluemont.
3. Encourage adaptive reuse of historic structures for compatible commercial uses (such as a country store operating in a former residential structure).
4. Research and study the creation of a new zoning district specific to St. Louis that would address design guidelines, allow managed growth, and limit the size and scale of new construction in order to further the potential for aging-in-place, and require new residential growth to respect the ongoing water limitations in the Village through hydrology studies for example.
5. Support the improvement of existing buildings and homes by expanding the County's Commissioner of Revenue residential real estate tax revitalization district program.
6. Initiate discussions with the community of St. Louis to create a local Historic District zoning overlay that meets the needs of the village through the prevention of demolition by neglect, the encouragement of property maintenance, evaluating in-fill policies, and historic preservation.
7. Encourage the use of conservation easements on larger properties as well as assemblages of smaller properties to conserve agricultural land surrounding the Village and reduce future residential development within the Village. This can be facilitated through community meetings to educate and discuss the details and process of easements. A local nonprofit conservation easement holder will be invited to perform a study or inventory of parcels that are currently not in conservation easement, to identify those which have the highest value of conservation/cultural assets, and therefore would be critical pieces of land to encourage protection of.
  - a. Provide brochures that offer information and guidance on how to place an easement on property and benefits.