

## **MDP Analysis of Charles County's Adopted Tier Map**

MDP has completed an extensive analysis of Charles County's adopted tier map. The following summary outlines our specific findings.

MDP staff worked closely with the County's Work Group in February to look in detail at Tiers III and IV. Staff provided information and analysis to support the Work Group in their efforts to develop a map that recognized existing land use as well as potential changes from an updated comprehensive plan. During the Work Group process, it was generally agreed that the Rural Conservation Deferred Development District - RC(D) would be mapped as a Tier IV. Below are several reasons why MDP believes this area should be mapped as a Tier IV.

### **Description of the Rural Conservation Deferred Development District - RC(D)**

The Charles County zoning code defines the Rural Conservation Deferred Development District - RC(D) as a zone that:

“maintains low-density residential development, preserves the rural environment and natural features and established character of the area. It also maintains existing agricultural and aquaculture activities and the land base necessary to support these activities. . . The County Commissioners will reconsider all RC(D) zoning on a not less than 5 year basis as part of, and concurrent with, the update of the Comprehensive Plan, or sooner if deemed appropriate by the County Commissioners.”

The RC(D) district's density of 1 unit per 10 acres serves to strengthen the purposes of the district as noted above - to preserve the rural environment, natural features and established character of the area and to maintain low-density residential development. A provision of the county's Ordinance Number 00-93 is for the County Commissioners to reconsider all RC(D) zoning on a not less than five-year basis as part of, or concurrent with, the update of the Comprehensive Plan. According to the latest draft Comprehensive Plan, this reconsideration has taken place with a recommendation that no changes be made to the Deferred Development District boundaries.

### **Supply/Demand**

LU §1-508 states that:

“(2) Tier II areas are areas that are:

(i) 1. planned to be served by public sewerage systems and in the municipal growth element; or

2. mapped locally designated growth areas; and

(ii) needed to satisfy demand for development at densities consistent with the long-term development policy after consideration of the capacity of land areas available for development, including in-fill and redevelopment, within the local jurisdiction;”

While the Rural Conservation Deferred Development District - RC(D) is within a mapped locally designated growth area and is planned for future sewer service, MDP’s findings indicate that there is an oversupply of land within areas identified as Tiers I and II that significantly exceeds the countywide demand for development through 2040. The County should understand the importance of providing an appropriate balance between land supply and population demand. If too much land is provided for development, inefficient land development patterns may develop, the ability for redevelopment projects to compete with greenfield development is diminished, and infrastructure expansion is less cost-effective. In addition, plans and growth controls will be marginalized because there is an abundance of locational options for each new development.

According to the County subdivision activity dataset, 10,037 residential lots have already been identified within preliminary and pending residential subdivisions within Tiers I and II. These approved lots represent enough supply to accommodate Charles County’s projected residential growth through 2020.

Between 2010 and 2040, Charles County is projected to grow by 32,000 new households. Within Tiers I and II there is enough land supply to accommodate an additional 51,442 residential lots; these are lots outside those already identified in preliminary and pending residential subdivisions. The total supply of residential lots exceeds the 30 year projection of household growth by 92%. Following projected growth rates, it would take nearly 58 years to absorb this amount of residential supply. Nearly 42% of this capacity exists within the Rural Conservation Deferred Development District - RC(D) zoning district, assuming that development in that area would be served by sewer and have a density yield of 3 dwelling units per acre. The current allowable density in the RC(D) is 1 dwelling unit per 10 acres.