

FLEXIBLE RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT EXAMPLES FOR THE DIVERSIFIED RURAL AREA

Background

Thrive MSP 2040 indicates that land use patterns in **Diversified Rural** communities are home to a variety of farm and non-farm land uses including very large-lot residential, clustered housing, hobby farms, and agricultural uses. Some Diversified Rural communities are also located in the Long-term Wastewater Service Area (LTSA). These areas are designated to ensure land availability to accommodate growth post-2040 at the edge of the urbanizing area.

Purpose

The purpose of flexible residential development ordinances and tools in these areas should be to preserve land for post-2040 growth and to accommodate the future extension of regional urban services. In August 2008, the Council adopted **Flexible Residential Development Ordinance Guidelines for the Diversified Rural Area** that describes the factors communities should take into account if they are considering allowing residential development at densities greater than 4 units per 40 acres in their communities. The Council has since incorporated these guidelines into *Thrive MSP 2040*.

Function

For those communities on the edge of the urbanizing area, designated as part of the LTSA, residential development ordinances should provide for interim land uses without precluding the opportunity for future development at densities of at least 3 units per net developable acre to ensure future, cost-effective and efficient regional wastewater treatment services. For areas outside of the LTSA, the Council also encourages the clustering of homes, particularly when communities are considering densities greater than 4 units per 40 acres.

Communities should study and assess their landscapes to refine their development priorities. There may be areas within the community that contain an abundance of sensitive natural resources or that the community has identified as a greenway or conservation corridor. These areas may not be most suitable for future urbanization as the capability of the land to support development is low and constrained. In these cases, open space development or cluster development may be adapted to protect those resources to meet the community's goals.



The Fields of St. Croix, Lake Elmo

Flexible Residential Development Guidelines

In considering ordinances and development that exceeds the 4 units per 40 acres density, communities should apply the following guidelines:

1. Include the need to reserve land resources for efficient future urban development as part of the ordinance purpose.
2. Identify the land characteristics required to support future urbanization.
3. Allow no more than 25% of the developable land in a project to be developed, reserving larger future urbanization parcels.
4. Protect future urbanization parcels with temporary development agreements, easements, or deed restrictions.
5. Provide for the rezoning of the future urbanization parcels to a residential zoning classification at densities consistent with Council policy at such time that urban services are available.
6. Encourage the use of community wastewater treatment systems to serve the temporary cluster.

Please refer to the full document, **Flexible Residential Development Ordinance Guidelines for the Diversified Rural Area**, for more information on these six guidelines.

Flexible Residential Ordinance Tools

If a community wishes to allow for increased densities within the Diversified Rural area beyond 4 units per 40 acres, the community should use mechanisms to allow for the future development of the land at urban development densities of at least 3 units per net developable acre. There are a number of tools that communities have utilized to meet these goals, including but not limited to the following:

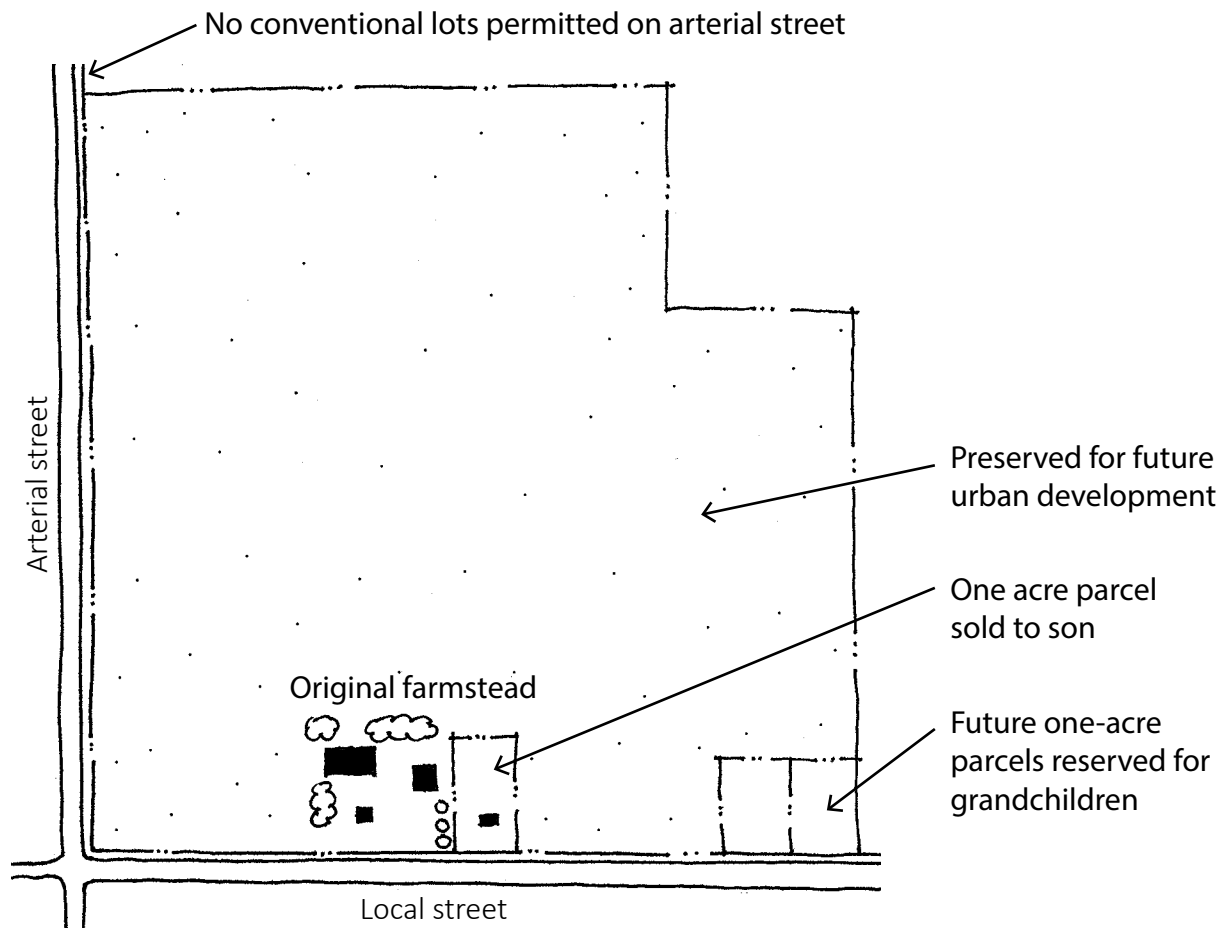
1. Adopt Cluster Ordinances to preserve open space and allow future urbanization.
2. Permit density bonuses for meeting certain specified ordinance requirements.
3. Use of Planned Unit Development (PUD) regulations to manage development and preserve open space.
4. Require Build-Out Plans (Ghost Platting) to demonstrate future subdivision for the delivery of urban services.
5. Employ platting techniques along with deed restrictions, easements, and covenants to protect open space for future development.
6. Use of overlay districts in specified areas to ensure mandatory clustering; for example, on land adjacent to urban service areas.

If a community adopts regulations to allow densities in the Diversified Rural area which exceed 4 units per 40 acres, the Metropolitan Council will need to review any revised ordinance details to ensure compliance with the community's Comprehensive Plan and future expansion of urban services.

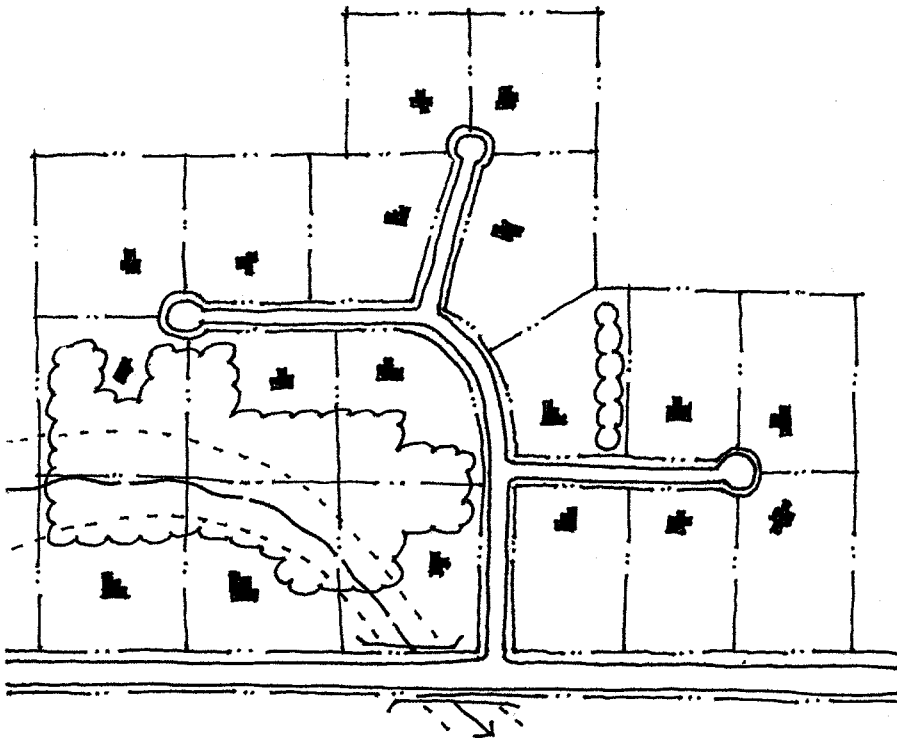
FLEXIBLE RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT EXAMPLES

There are many different development styles a community might use to allow for current development while reserving land for future urban development. This section describes some of the development patterns available to communities.

Traditional Rural Cluster



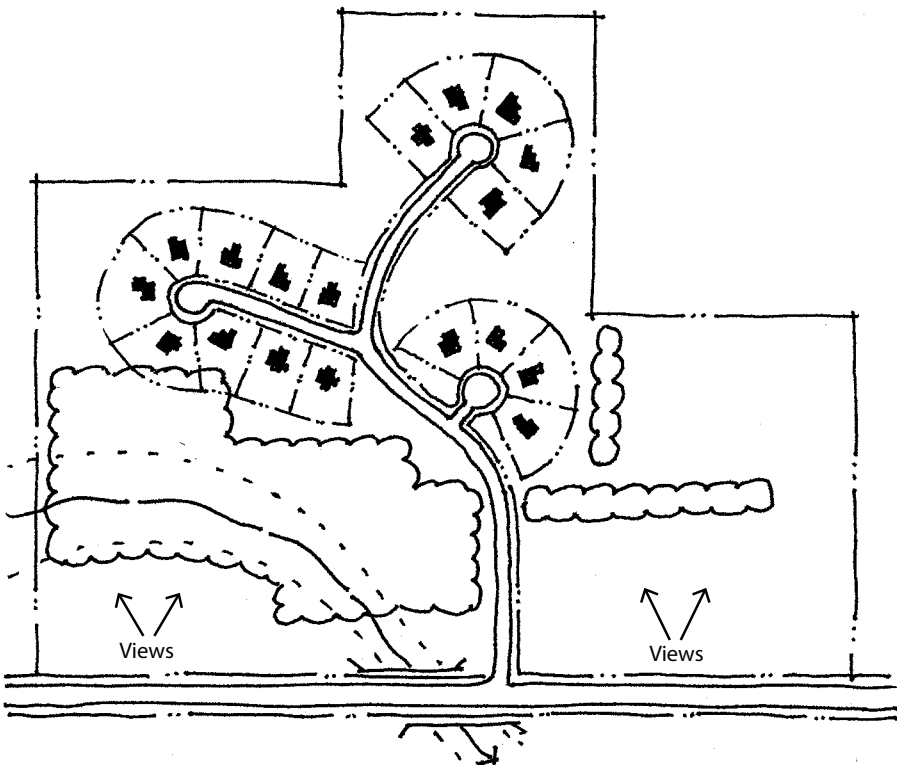
The traditional rural cluster above shows that a mandatory cluster district may allow for a defined, limited number of lot splits within a contiguous rural acreage if certain parameters are met, such as specified lot sizes and frontage on a local street. The above example allows for future subdivision of the residual parcel to allow for urban services. This method of subdivision would need to be tracked by the municipality over time to ensure that sufficient land is preserved to allow for a subdivision layout at acceptable densities and access to allow for future urban services.



Conventional Development

Acres: 80
Lots: 18
Density: 1 unit per 3.3 acres
Minimum lot size: 3 acres
Common open space: 0%

Note: No conventional lots are typically permitted on an arterial street.



Rural Cluster

Acres: 80
Lots: 18
Density: 1 unit per 3.3 acres
Minimum lot size: 1/2 acre
Common open space: 75%

Credit: Adapted from Rural Cluster Development Guide, Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission

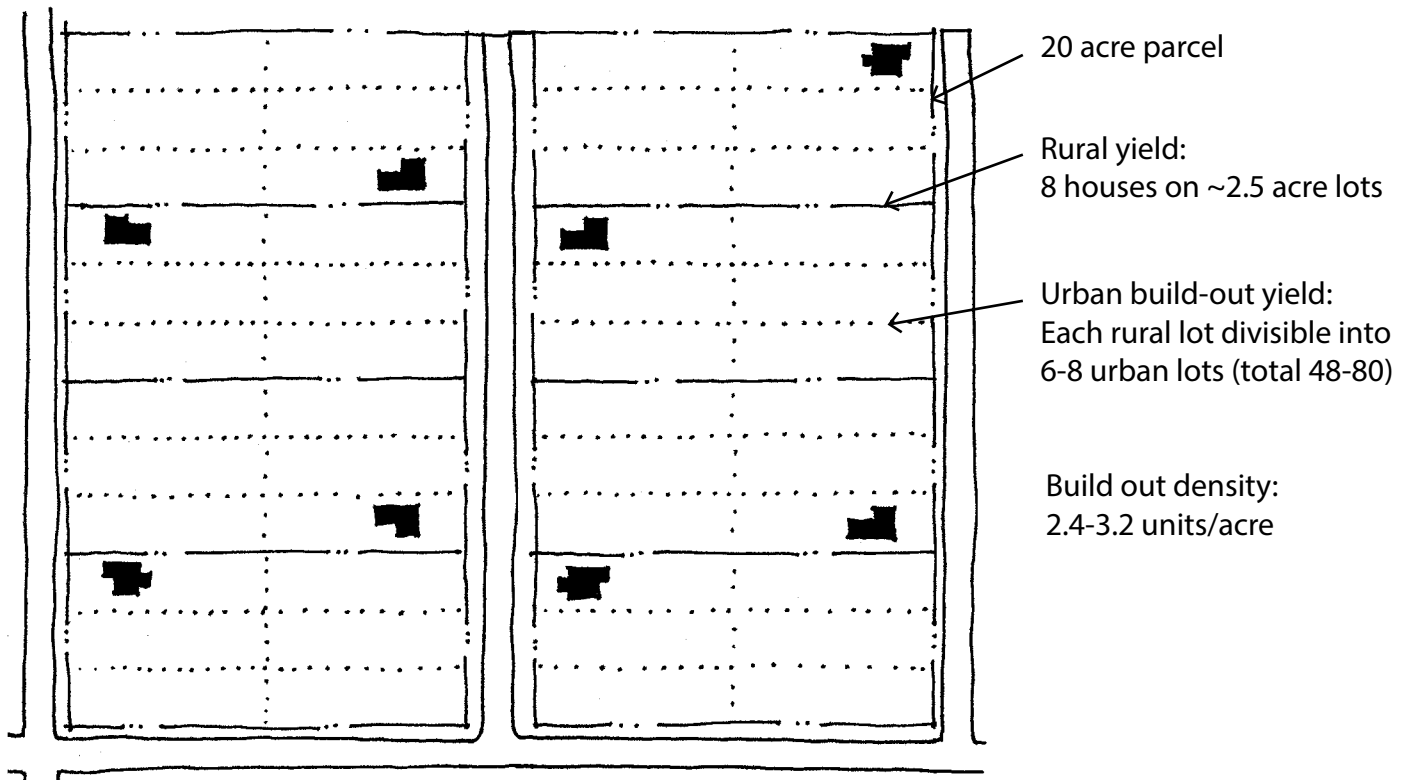
The Rural Cluster Development shows a more proactive approach to the preservation of land for future urban service balanced with the preservation of natural resources.

The first image shows a conventional large-lot rural development which precludes the provision of urban services due to the ineffective lot layout and inefficiency of multiple or long-distance connection points to urban services. The Council has found that this style of large-lot rural development does not advance the mission of ensuring orderly and economical development in the region.

The second example, of a rural cluster development, preserves high amenity open space for resource protection and recreation, while ensuring a compact lot layout which allows for effective delivery of urban services. Additional urbanized development may be accommodated in the eastern portion of that site as well. The Rural Cluster Development may utilize a communal septic system until such time that urban services become available.

Build-Out Plan (Ghost Platting)

The Build-Out Plan, or ghost platting, is a method of master planning for future urban densities in rural large-lot subdivisions. The subdivision is organized in a way that will facilitate a transition to higher density at some future date, perhaps through the use of development or service infrastructure triggers. This is often achieved by restricting the location of buildings to avoid obstructions to future utility and roadway easements. Platting for future urban densities is achieved by establishing lines for future splits of large lots into smaller lots and dedication of rights-of-way and easements for future streets, utilities, storm water facilities, etc. This method of subdivision is another front-loading process which preserves land for future urbanization. Oftentimes, the Build-Out Plan may limit the location and size of the residential footprint to more effectively allow for future subdivision of lots.



Note: In this scenario no conventional lots are permitted on arterial street, but rather all front on local streets.

Build Through Acreages

Build Through Acreages can allow for development at lower densities while preserving open space for future development through the platting process. A large outlot can be established to allow for future development at densities that can allow for urban service expansion. The outlot may also be encumbered with deed restrictions, covenants, or easements to provide the interim protection of open space and maintain subsequent triggers for development and service delivery.

This method can also be useful in areas in a Rural Residential community designation that may benefit from clustering, but are still undeveloped in the conventional large-lot pattern. In these cases, it may be advisable to preserve land for future residential development if the outlot abuts land within the Council's Long Term Service Area.



Original parcel boundary
(approximately 80 acres)

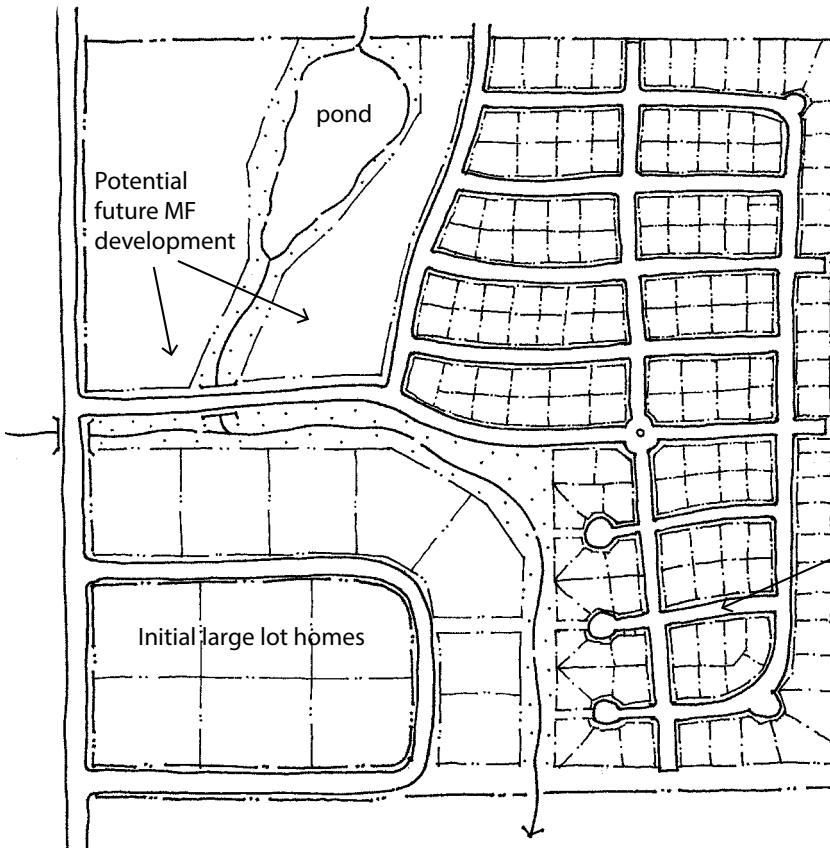
An additional portion of the parcel may be used for interim rural residential development if a significant environmental or open space resource is preserved.

A portion of the parcel may be used for rural residential development.

The rest of the parcel is platted as an outlet, reserved for future urban development when municipal services are extended.

(Adapted from RDG Planning & Design)

The example below, adapted from Bismarck, North Dakota, shows an historic outlet which was subdivided into smaller lots once urban services became available to the east.



Rural yield: 13 houses on large lots
Urban yield: 157 houses on the outlet; 3.97 du/ac
Build out density could include sewer extension to initial large lot houses and accommodate future multi-family development.

Original outlet developed at urban densities once municipal services are available.

March 2017