

NORTH PULASKI COUNTY PLANNING AREA

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NORTH PULASKI COUNTY PLANNING AREA

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NORTH PULASKI COUNTY PLANNING AREA

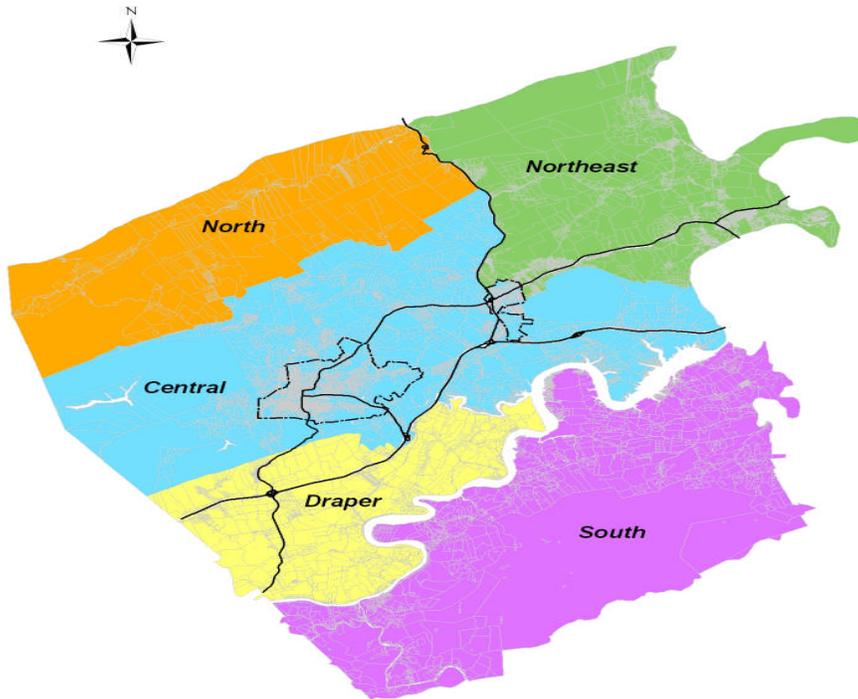
Introduction

The Pulaski County Comprehensive Plan is divided into two volumes. Volume 1 covers county-wide information pertaining to history, geography, the natural environment, and demographics. Volume 2 contains planning area specific information. At the start of the Comprehensive Plan update in late 2006 the County was divided into five (5) planning areas (Northeast, North, Central, Draper and South). The division of planning areas was based primarily on two factors, community relationships, in terms of how residents perceive their location in the County, and the availability of census data to study the selected areas.

This document is the North Planning Area chapter of Volume 2. Each planning area chapter is drafted to stand independent of the others; however, the relationships between planning areas is significant and should be considered when making planning decisions.

Figure 1

PULASKI COUNTY Planning Areas



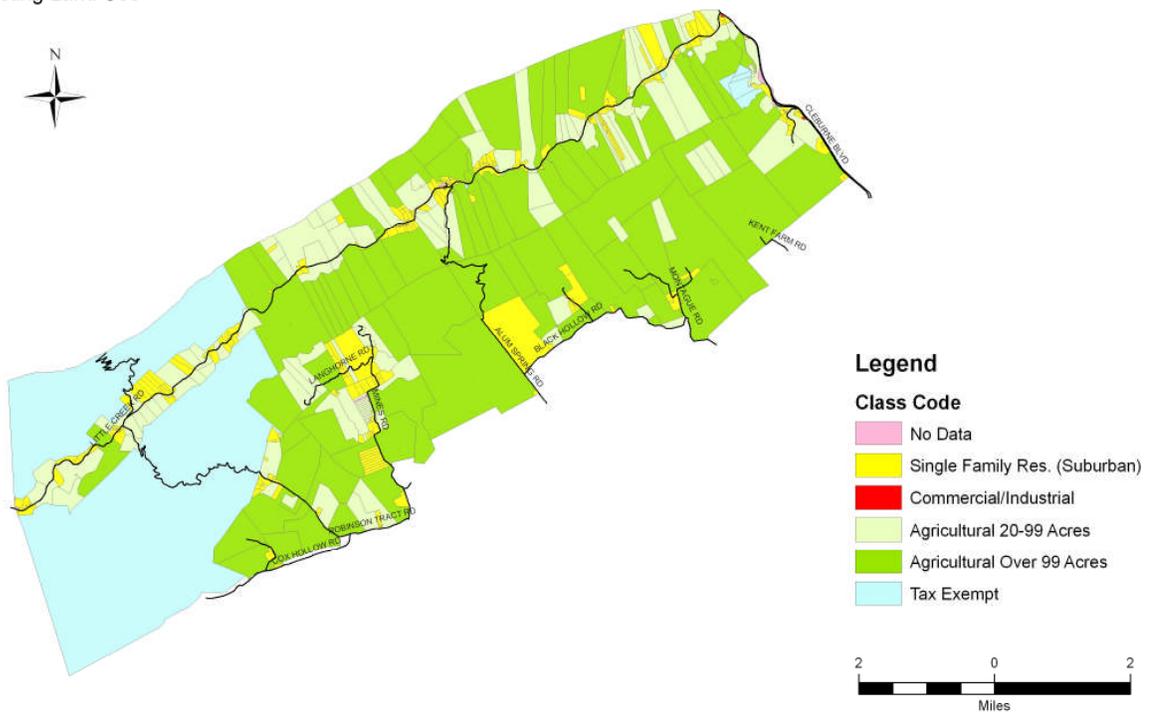
Description

The North Planning Area is bounded on the east by Route 100, the north by Giles County, the west by Bland County, and the south border roughly follows Back Creek and Tract Fork Creek into the Jefferson National Forest (see map below). Agriculture is a major land use activity in the Area. Residential uses are the most dominate in terms of the number of parcels devoted to a specific use (318). There are 226 parcels devoted to agriculture, 132 of those parcels are between 20 to 99 acres, while 94 parcels are larger than 99 acres. This planning area has 19 parcels that are tax exempt, the majority of which are churches and cemeteries. This planning area has three (3) commercial parcels, all along Rt. 100 near the Giles County boarder. This planning area is well suited for conservation easements. The planning area contains several natural resources worthy of protecting, along with a substantial agriculture base.

Figure 2

North Planning Area

Existing Land Use



Created using Pulaski County land book data.



Existing Conditions

Citizens Participation

The Planning Commission held a public input session on June 5th, 2007 at the New River Valley Regional Airport on Rt. 100 north of Dublin. Maps of the area were available for use by participants as well as flip charts for the recording of issue areas or specific problem areas. The meeting was advertised through utility bill inserts, website announcements, local print media and flyers. Survey responses from the session can be found in the Appendix.

Estimated Population Change

When calculating the county population various methods yield drastically different results, from declining population levels to a 25% increase. For discussion, the mid-ground seems to be a population adjustment from 35, 127 in 2000 to 37, 332 in 2010 and 39, 657 in the year 2020.

It is estimated that approximately 1.5% of the change in county population will occur in the North Planning Area. Based upon this assumption, some 30 persons will locate in the Area by 2010 and an additional 35 by 2020. The projection would indicate that in evaluating change, a population increase of approximately 60 should be utilized.

Existing Conditions - Land Use

The North Planning Area is predominantly an agriculture community. While there are 94 parcels exceeding 99 acres, these parcels are often quite large, some exceeding 1,000 acres. There are more large parcels dedicated to agriculture in this area than any other planning area in the county. The North area also has very little commercial land use and it can be found where Little Creek Road meets Rt. 100. The residents of this area primarily rely on the towns of Dublin and Pulaski for their commercial needs.

The western quarter of the planning area is within the Jefferson National Forest. The Forest serves as a significant resource for the community in terms of a water recharge area, recreation offerings, and wildlife habitat. The remaining three-quarters of the planning area contain limited residential along Little Creek Road and Mines Road with the remainder being in agricultural use.

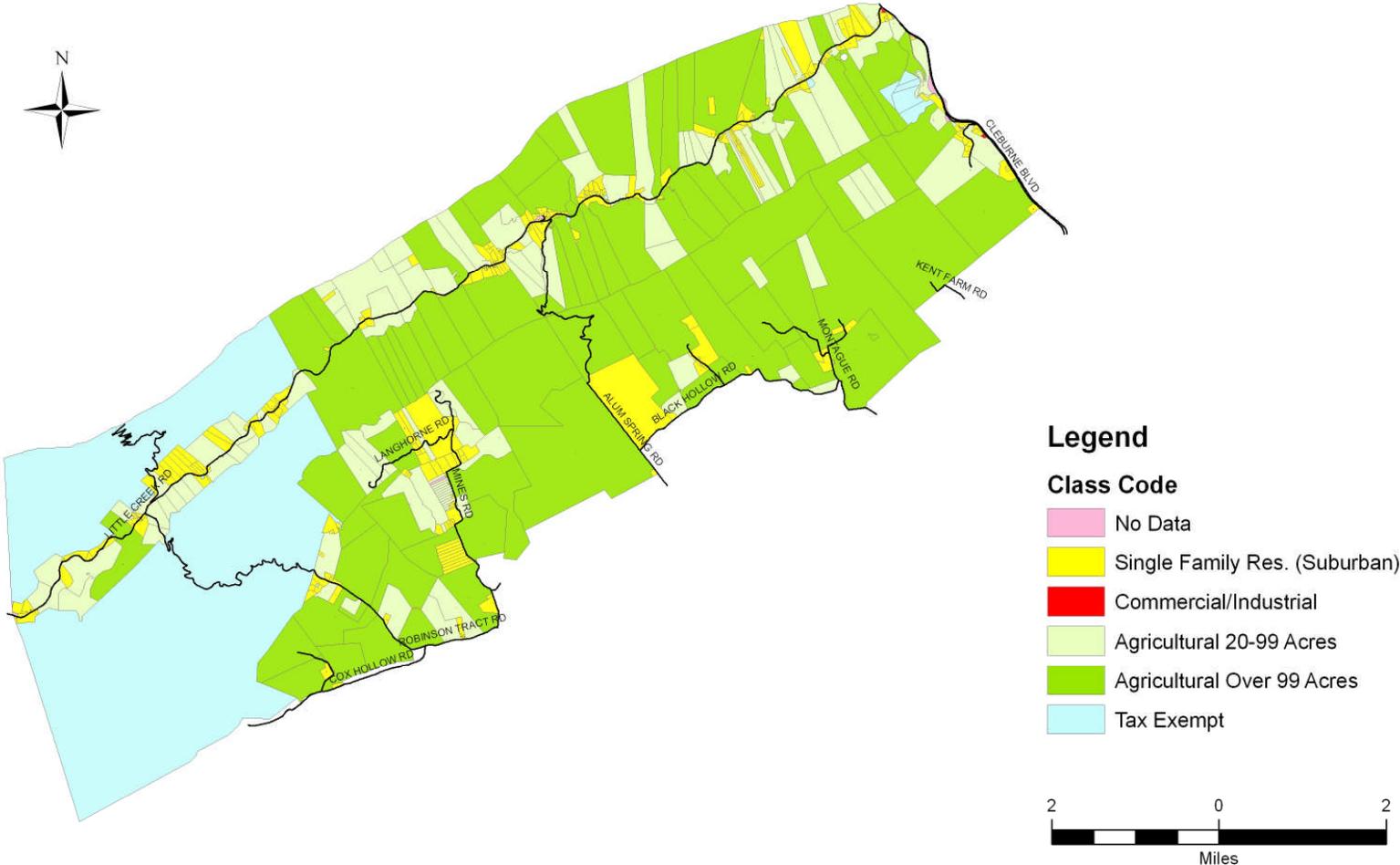
This planning area is unique in that the watershed boundary of Little Walker Creek in Pulaski County serves as the planning area boundary. This is significant because Little Walker Creek is on the impaired stream list. The impairment is indicated as bacteria due to agriculture/wildlife. A Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) study is not scheduled for this waterway, but will be complete by 2011. The TMDL process and resulting recommendations will play a significant role in the future land use for this planning area.



Figure 3

North Planning Area

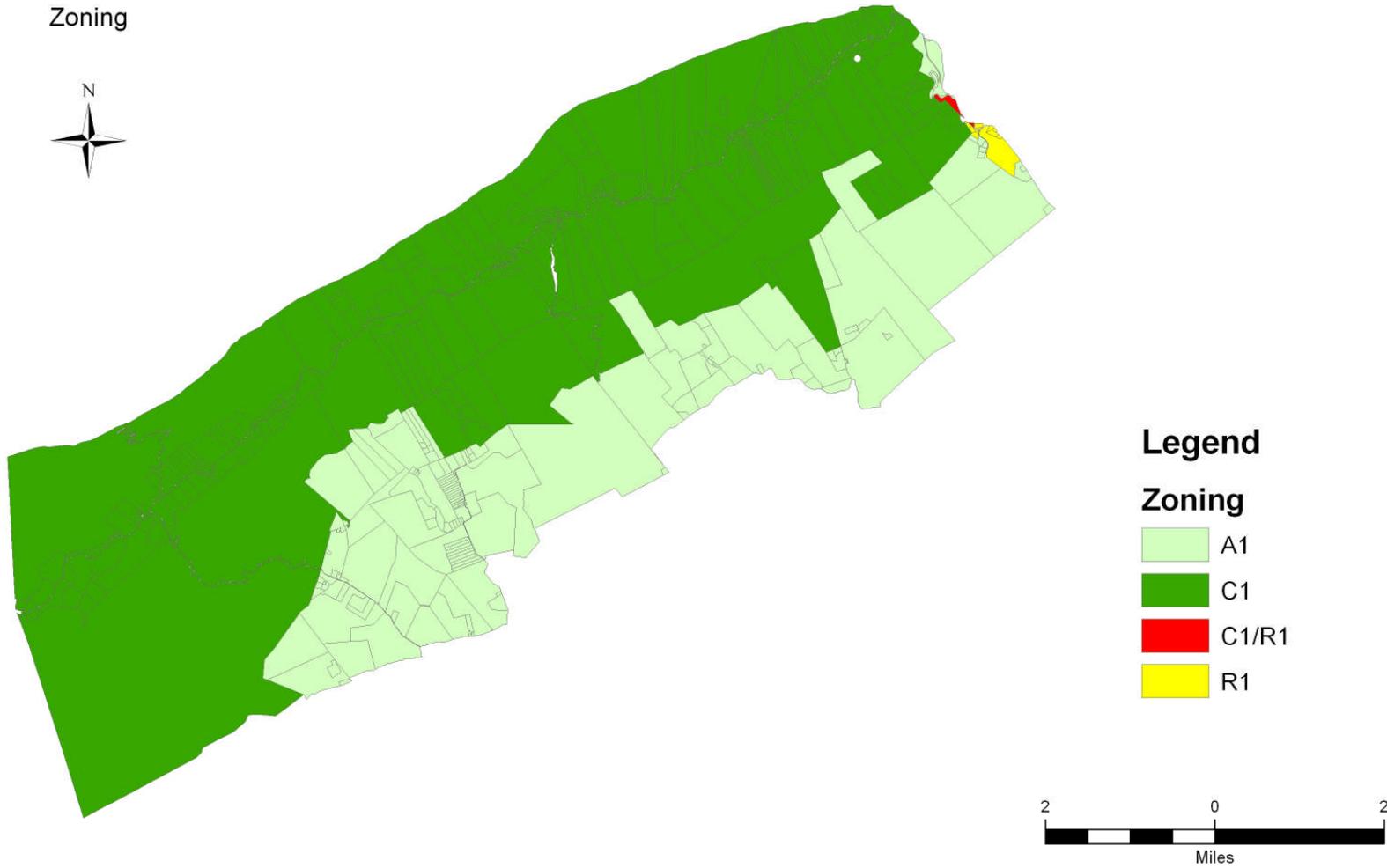
Existing Land Use



Created using Pulaski County land book data.



Figure 4
North Planning Area
Zoning



Created using Pulaski County land book data.



Future Land Use

Assumptions

The Planning Area is well suited for receiving conservation easements

A population increase of roughly 60 residents by 2020

Alternative energy, particularly wind energy, may play a role in future land use

Agriculture will remain an important component in the community

Citizens Review of Plan Alternatives

The Planning Commission provided the citizens of the Planning Area an opportunity to comment on the draft development alternatives during the June 5th 2007 meeting. The resulting discussion found the residents recognizing their community as heavily rooted in agriculture and desiring the future land use to remain consistent with agriculture and residential along Little Creek Road.

Residential Land Use

There are 318 lots dedicated to residential use and most of these are found along the Little Creek Road corridor. The Mine Road corridor and a small area along Rt. 100 also contain residential uses. Much of the residential use is to support the agricultural industry of the area, opposed to suburban neighborhood development. When future residential development occurs in this planning area, cluster development should be recommended. This development technique provides for smaller lots while allowing more land area to remain undeveloped for uses such as agriculture or open space. Future residential subdivisions should be located as close to Little Creek Road and Rt. 100 intersection as possible. The further out Little Creek Road development occurs, the more costly it will be to provide services.

Industrial Development

The North Planning Area does not contain a major industrial land use. The previous county landfill is located on the eastern end of the planning area adjacent Rt. 100 and should be monitored regularly for leachate. The potential for alternative energy in the forms of natural gas and wind should be evaluated by the county. Gas from the old landfill may be converted to a useable form of alternative energy, while wind energy may be generated along Little Walker Mountain, or other ridges in the planning area.



Protection of Agricultural Production

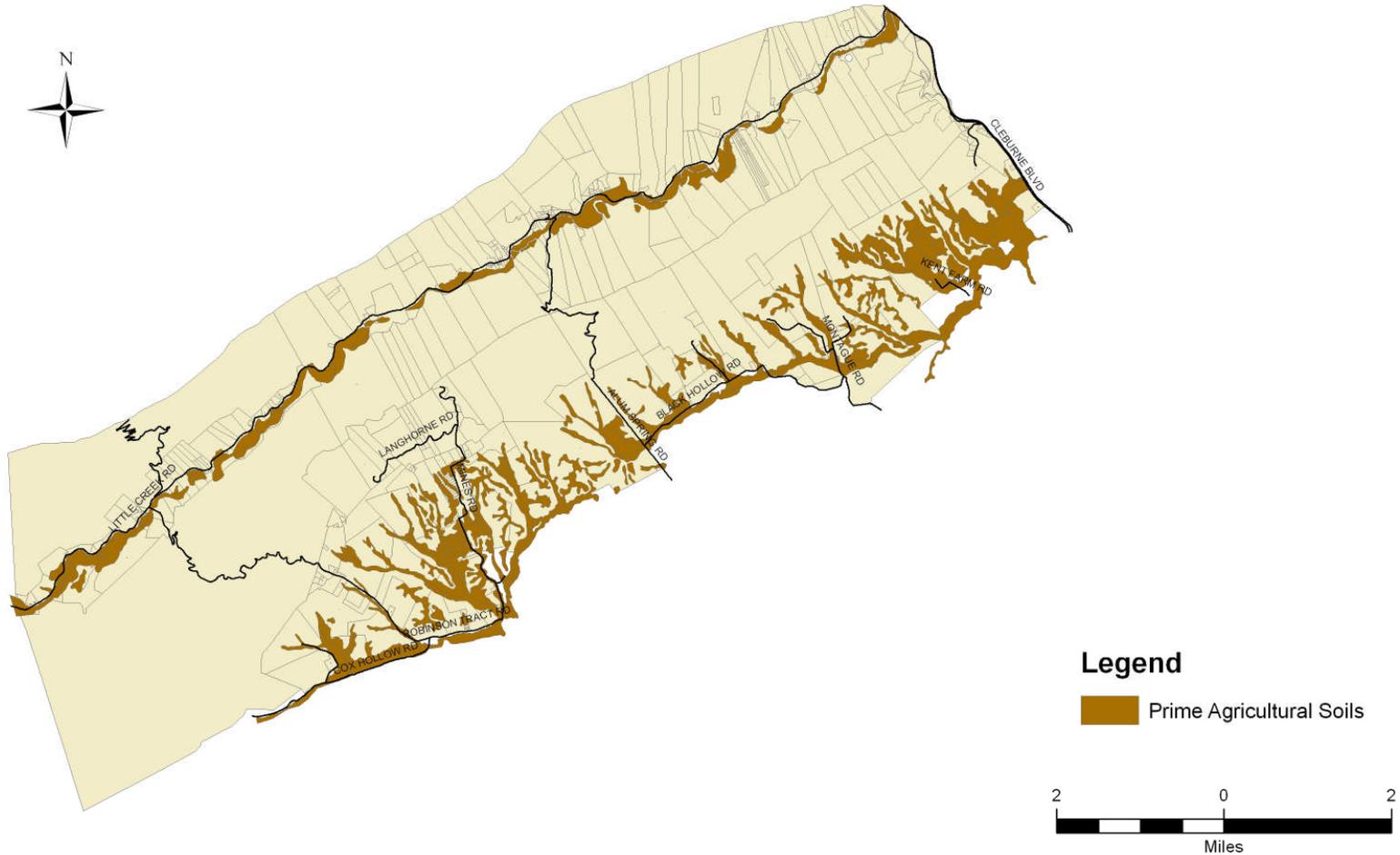
While the most intense agricultural area in the County, this Planning Area deserves attention towards its agricultural preservation. It is important that the agricultural uses in the area remain protected from encroachment; particularly the working farms on prime agricultural soils and those on slopes less than 15% (see Prime Soil Map page 7 and Slope Map page 8). Any major residential developments should be where public utilities are available or can be extended to support the proposed development. In order to support affordable housing and lifestyle preferences, zoning districts covering the prime agricultural areas should allow limited division of property for residential purposes, not including subdivisions on less than 2 acre lots.



Figure 5

North Planning Area

Prime Agricultural Soils

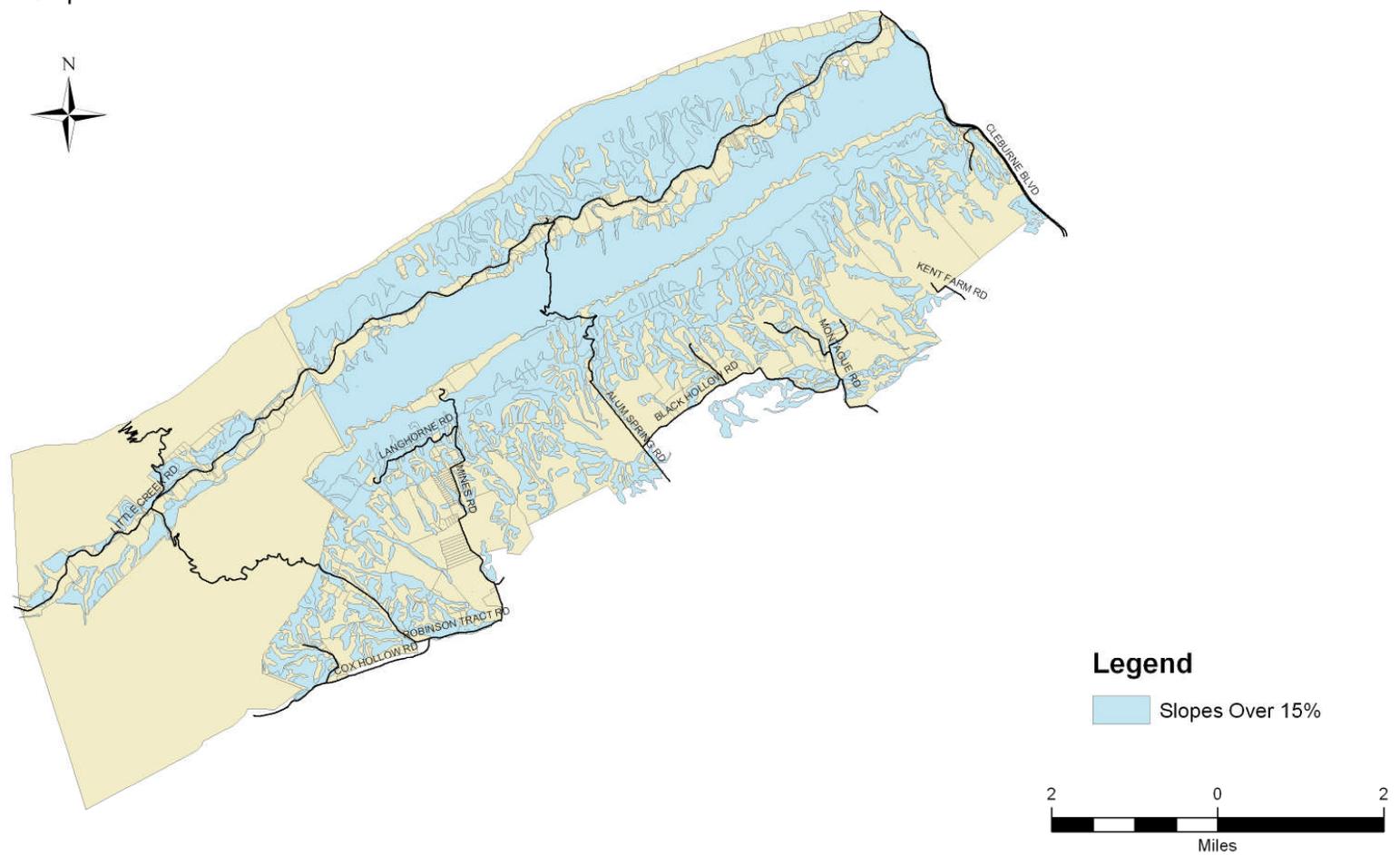


Created using Pulaski County land book and soil data.



Figure 6
North Planning Area

Slopes



Created using Pulaski County land book and soil data.



Conservation Easements

Conservation easements are legal agreements that property owners make to limit the type and amount of development that may occur on a property (see VA State Code §10.1-1009, 1010, et al). The easements are often a landowner's decision to affirm land use decisions in perpetuity as well as a response to federal and state tax incentives. To qualify for the tax benefits of a donation, the easement must be in perpetuity, rather than a predetermined term limit.

The easement prevents development of a parcel and protects the conservation value of the property. The result is seen as a public value of protecting "rare" and/or "unique" conservation values associated with a particular parcel of land. Both "rare" and "unique" are terms used in the federal tax code. The measure of "cost" of an easement is determined by a qualified appraiser calculating the value of the easement by assessing the market value (development potential value) of the property before the easement is given and subtracting the value of the land after the easement is donated. There is not a value of "public benefit" calculated for the parcel in terms of protecting "rare" and/or "unique" conservation values.

The reduced value of the property becomes a perpetual cost to the locality in terms of the reduced property value. In the absence of protecting "rare" and/or "unique" conservation values for the community, this cost can become very high.

As a result, the acceptance of the land use implications of any conservation easement should be based upon the net value to the public including the perpetual control of land use decisions being made by a current land owner in a dynamic economy and community. Based upon the considerations in the County's Comprehensive Plan, Conservation Easements should be determined to be a use of land. As such the zoning ordinance should be amended to include conservation easements as a special exception in both the Conservation District and the Agricultural District. The approval of a special exception should be granted only after the owner demonstrates in an application that the easement provides protection to "rare" and/or "unique" conservation values to the public which outweigh the costs of the donation.

North Easement Receiving Areas

The North Planning Area contains some of the County's most intense agricultural land uses. Conservation easements are one tool to ensure agricultural property remains in the planning area and in several instances easements may be the correct strategy. Further, Little Walker Creek is on the impaired streams list and an easement combined with strategic agricultural watering approaches is a way to improve the condition of Little Walker Creek. This planning area also contains significant viewsheds of Walker Mountain along the Giles County/Pulaski County boarder and Little Walker Mountain to the south. Easements to protect this viewshed are valuable. However, alternative energy, particularly wind generation, should be considered when accepting easements along these ridges. Although alternative energy such as wind is not occurring in the planning area, this may be a major land use in the future. Easement terms should address this issue. Lastly, easements adjacent to the Jefferson National Forest should be



encouraged. Providing for “green connections” to the National Forest is a significant benefit for wildlife, water recharge, and other natural resources.

Agricultural Land Use Taxation

Most of the lands in the Conservation and Agricultural Districts which are devoted to agricultural production are currently being taxed at the agricultural land use rate. It is this rate which would serve as the floor rate for lands with conservation easements. However, forest lands and other non-agricultural qualifying uses would have pre-easement tax rates higher than the agricultural land use rate. In order to preserve agricultural land use activities it is important for the County to correctly assess properties during land valuation periods. It is also important to establish the agricultural tax rate at a level where production can still occur and profits from production can be realized.

Future Land Use Plan

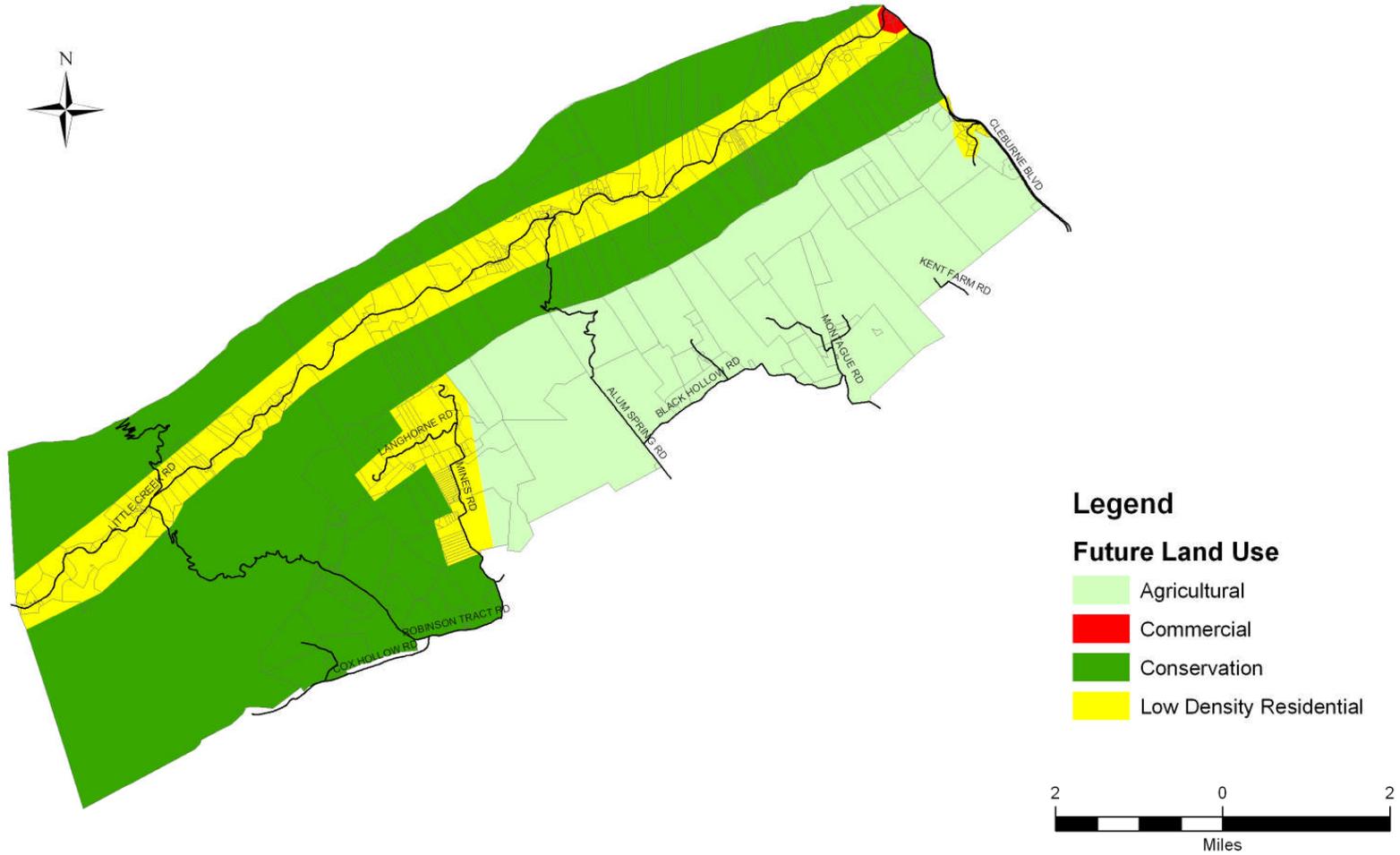
On the future land use map (page 11), areas south of Little Walker Mountain are indicated as agriculture while areas north of Little Walker are conservation, with low density residential along the Little Creek Road corridor. This planning area is well suited for conservation easements considering the principle land use is agriculture and numerous natural resources. Several of the agricultural parcels are of sizeable amounts, which aid in conservation easement acceptance. By acquiring easements in close proximity to the Jefferson National Forest the green infrastructure of the area is greatly expanded. Little Walker Creek, an important natural resource, was determined impaired by the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality for bacteria along its 17 mile reach. A Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) Plan should be prepared for this waterway in the near future due to its significance in groundwater recharge and farming activities. Back Creek, which forms the boarder of the North Planning Area and the Central Planning Area is also identified as impaired by bacteria. A TMDL Plan was created in 2005 with implementation starting in 2006 and currently continuing. Future land uses should also provide for telecommunication sites along either Walker Mountain or Little Walker Mountain.



Figure 7

North Planning Area

Future Land Use



Created using Pulaski County land book data.



Land Use Action Plan

Short Term

- Endorse land conservation tactics for preserving natural resources in the planning area.
- Amend zoning ordinance for agricultural district to restrict residential subdivision.
- Limit residential development in agriculturally zoned areas to protect agricultural economy.
- Review land classification database at time of next real estate assessment to ensure proper coding.
- Maintain support of the New River Valley Airport (adjacent to planning area)
- Schedule identified transportation improvements in the six-year plan.
- Rezone land near the intersection of Little Creek Rd and Rt. 100 to reflect current land uses, particularly commercial uses.

Medium Term

- Continue to monitor the old landfill for leachate.
- Evaluate the ability to generate alternative energy through wind and/or natural gas.
- Support residential development in areas where public infrastructure exists or can be provided.
- Consider impact on agriculture for parcels rezoned to residential.
- Endorse land conservation tactics for preserving natural resources in the planning area.
- Consider increasing the date of rollback period for agricultural land use taxation from 5 years to 7 years.

Long Term

- Evaluate the ability to generate alternative energy through wind and/or natural gas.
- Support commercial land uses along Rt. 100 that provide services to residents of the Planning Area and those traveling through.
- Continue to monitor the old landfill for leachate.
- Endorse land conservation tactics for preserving natural resources in the planning area.
- Support alternative transportation/recreation along rural routes in the planning area.



Transportation

Transportation Policies

The policies below apply to the North Planning Area:

- Improve safety of transportation network
 - Install “No Thru Truck” signs on Robinson Tract Rd.
 - Place safety guardrails where needed on steep curves.
- Resurface Kent Farm Road
 - Work with VDOT to determine traffic volume and review surface needs. (aggregate vs. asphalt)
- Continue to maintain Little Creek Road
 - Keep the planning areas’ major thoroughfare in regular maintenance.

Transportation Action Plan

Short Term:

1. Place “No Truck” signs on Robinson Tract Road:

Estimated Cost: \$4,000.00

Place one sign at the southern end where Cox Hollow Road intersects and another at the northern end where Little Creek Road intersects. This should keep large trucks from getting stuck on the road not suitable to their needs.

Mid-Term:

1. Install safety improvements:

Estimated Cost: \$4,500,000.00

Safety improvements are needed along steep and curvy rural roads. Identify specific locations for these improvements.

2. Resurface Kent Farm Road:

Estimated Cost: \$3,000,000.00

Review the traffic volumes for this road and evaluate the need for asphalt versus aggregate surface.

Long-Term:

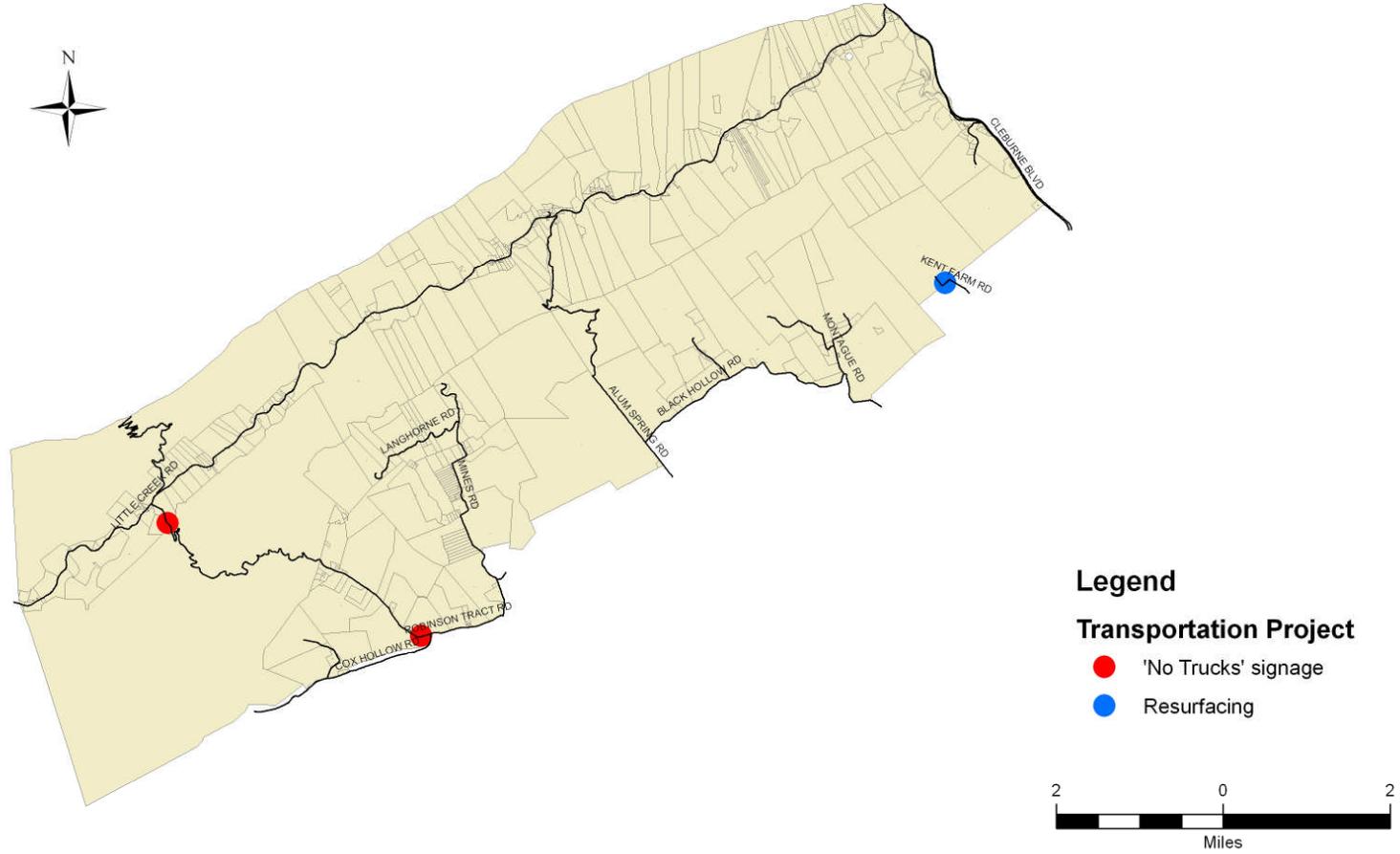
1. Continue to maintain Little Creek Road:

Estimated Cost: \$6,800,000.00

Little Creek Road is the most significant corridor in the planning area. Routine maintenance is required to ensure the level of performance.



Figure 8
North Planning Area
 Transportation Projects



Created using Pulaski County land book data.



Coordination of Land Use and Transportation

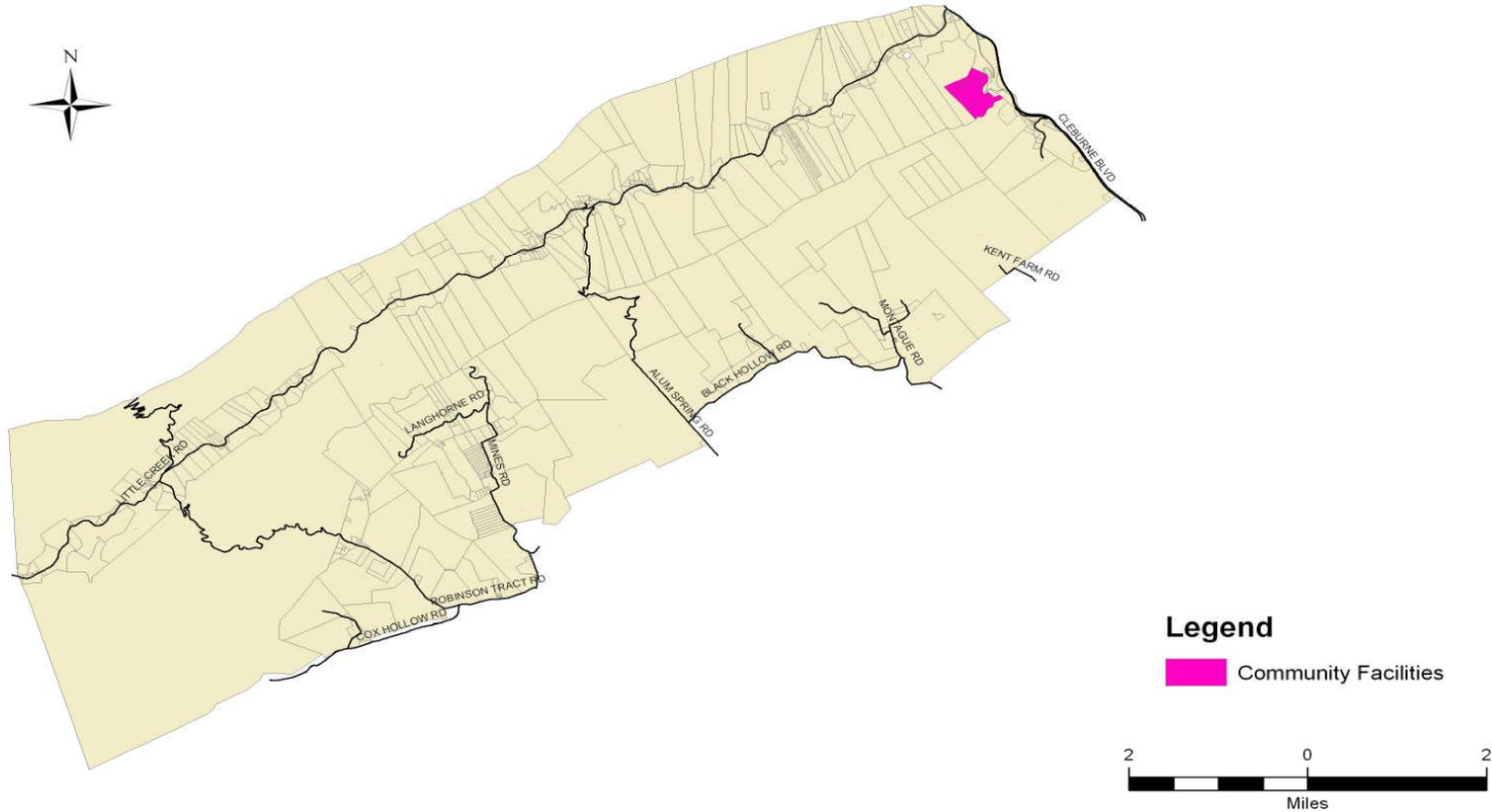
Effective as of July 1, 2007, §15.2-2222.1 Coordination of State and Local Transportation Planning. Localities that receive a rezoning, site plan, or subdivision request that substantially affects transportation on state-controlled highways must submit a Traffic Impact Analysis to the Department of Transportation for review. Comprehensive Plan amendments that substantially affect state-controlled highways must also be submitted to the Department of Transportation for review.

Alternative Transportation and Recreation Policies

- Foster cooperative relationships with State and Federal agencies and outdoor guide services/private sector to market assets and promote Pulaski County as an origin/destination.
- Support alternative transportation, primarily bicycles, along rural routes.
- Locate and install signage for public access points to Little Walker Creek



Figure 9
North Planning Area
Community Facilities



Created using Pulaski County land book data.

Community Facilities

1. Old Pulaski County Landfill



Appendix - A

Public Input Summary

June 5th, 2007

1) What do you like about your community?

Quiet

2) What would you change in your community, if you could?

Road Improvements

3) What do you like about Pulaski County?

Tax Rate

4) What would you change about Pulaski County, if you could?

More Jobs

5) What kind of community do you want the area to be in 20 years?

Safe and Drug Free

6) How long have you lived in the part of the county?

20 years

7) Please provide any other input you feel is important to the future of your community.

Install caution lights on Rt. 11 North and South during races at the speedway.

