



Montgomery County, Virginia

RURAL-RESIDENTIAL (R-R)

R-R District: Rural-Residential (RR) districts are noted for quiet, low-density, residential development with a distinct rural character. In addition, rural residential areas include open space areas where similar residential developments are likely to occur. The regulations in the Rural-Residential (RR) districts are designed to stabilize and protect the essential characteristics of the district, to promote and encourage a suitable environment for family life, to provide for an orderly transition from predominantly agricultural or forestal uses to primarily rural residential uses. Commercial development in the R-R zone is strictly limited. The district allows certain home occupations, some public/ private institutional development (churches, schools, parks), and single-family dwellings. Given the rural nature of the district development is generally not served by public water and sewer.

Lands qualifying for inclusion in the Rural Residential (RR) district shall be within areas mapped as Rural, Rural Communities, or Residential Transition in the Comprehensive Plan and shall not, generally, include parcels either served by or slated to be served by public water or sewer. The minimum area required to create a Rural-Residential district is a minimum of five (5) acres of contiguous total land.

Finally, developers in the Rural-Residential district may opt for the compact development option available in other residential districts. The compact development option, which allows for higher density development, is designed to encourage natural resource preservation among other features.

What can I do by right in an R-R district?

There are uses that are designated as "by right" which means you do not have to apply for a Special Use Permit (SUP). The uses do, however, have to comply with all approved plans and permits, development standards, and performance standards included in the Montgomery County Zoning Ordinance and with all other applicable regulations. The "by right" uses include:

- Agriculture, small-scale*
- Bed & Breakfast, homestay
- Church
- Dwelling, single-family
- Home Occupation
- Park, unlighted
- Pet, Farm
- Pet, Household
- Playground, Unlighted
- Public Utility lines, water and sewer, and other (See Zoning Definitions)
- School
- Telecommunication tower, attached

*Small-scale agriculture is defined in the Zoning Ordinance as the production of plants and animals useful to humans, including field crops, pasture, fruits, vegetables, floral and greenhouse products, sod, viticulture, silviculture, aquaculture, apiculture, poultry and other fowl, horses and other livestock, and the necessary accessory uses. Small-scale production limits the number of animals to no more than three (3) per acre and no more than ten (10) for the entire tract.

What uses require a Special Use Permit (SUP)?

Some uses are allowed in the R-R district with the permission of the Board of Supervisors through the Special Use Permit process (applications available from the Planning Dept.) These include:

- Bed and Breakfast Inn
- Cemetery
- Civic Club
- Country Club
- Day Care Center
- Fire, Police and Rescue Station
- Golf Course
- Golf Driving Range
- Home Business
- Park, Lighted
- Playground, Lighted
- Public Utility Substation
- Public Utility Plant, water or sewer
- Stable, commercial
- Structure over 50 feet in height
- Telecommunications Tower, Free-standing
- Veterinary Practice, Animal Hospital

In addition, a Special Use Permit is required from the Board of Zoning Appeals or Board of Supervisors (see Section 10-23 of the Montgomery County Code for clarification) for the following:

- Accessory Structures greater than 1,200 sq. ft in area and/or 18 ft in height.

Building & Lot Requirements

Each zoning district has different lot and building requirements; which are meant to insure the compatibility of new development with the existing development in the surrounding area.

Minimum Lot Area

The minimum lot size varies depending on the intended use. For small-scale agricultural operation(s), the minimum lot size is five (5) acres. For all other uses, the minimum lot size is one and one-half (1.5) acres. The minimum width of a parcel must be at least one hundred and twenty (120) feet at the setback, line of the front yard. On any lot less than fifty (50) acres, the maximum length/width ratio is five to one (5:1).

Lot Access

All R-R lots must be accessed from a road in the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) road system.

Total Impervious Coverage:

The impervious surface (a surface that does not absorb water, such as concrete, asphalt, stone, or roofing materials) cannot cover more than thirty percent (30%) of the lot.

Maximum Building Coverage:

The buildings shall not cover more than ten percent (10%) of the gross site area.

Minimum Yards: (See Section 10-41(15) (d) for setbacks from intensive agricultural operations)

- Front: forty (40) feet
- Side: fifteen (15) feet (applicable to primary/principal structures)
- Rear: forty (40) feet (applicable to primary/principal structures)

Accessory Buildings/Structures:

Accessory structures must be a minimum of ten (10) feet from side or rear lot lines.

Maximum Building Height:

A building cannot exceed thirty-five (35) feet in height. No structure in the Rural-Residential district can exceed fifty (50) feet in height unless authorized by a special use permit issued by the Board of Supervisors on advice from the Planning Commission.

R-R (Rural Residential) Compact Development Option

A compact development option is available in the R-R district, allows for smaller (1 acre) and narrower (100 ft.) lots than are allowed under the traditional requirements. The compact development option does require 25% of the gross area of the parent parcel be set aside as green space (1.25 acre lot minimum). The green space can either be publicly or privately owned or used for passive or active recreation.

Maximum Length/Width Ratio:

Five to one (5:1) for any lot less than 20 acres in area.

Minimum Yards:

- Front: Thirty (30) feet
- Side: Ten (10) feet for each principle structure.
- Rear: Thirty (30) feet.
- Accessory Buildings: No less than ten (10) feet to side or rear lot line.

Rezoning from the A-1 District

In most cases where a developer would like to build in the A-1 (Agricultural) district, rezoning to Rural Residential (R-R) will be necessary. Other residential districts require public water and sewer, which are not part of the A-1 or the R-R districts. Rezoning benefits both the developer, by allowing greater density than would be permissible in the A-1 District, and those people living in close proximity to the proposed development. In most situations, both developers and neighbors benefit by the process because it allows for the design and construction of projects that truly fit the character of the area.

**For additional information contact:
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This sheet is intended to only be a guide for development regulations in this zoning district. Please see Chapter 10 of the Montgomery County Code for the specific regulations. The full texts of the zoning and subdivision ordinances are available at www.montgomerycountyva.gov/planning or at www.municode.com.