

CRITICAL DIGITAL INFRASTRUCTURE OVERLAY ZONE

Planning Commission Recommendation

An Element of the Livable Frederick Comprehensive Plan

Frederick County, Maryland

November 2025



The Frederick County Planning Commission

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Projection: NAD 1983 State Plane Maryland FIP 1900 Feet. MAPID:540

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Introduction

On May 6, 2025, Frederick County Executive Jessica Fitzwater and the County Council announced that data center development will be limited to the area around the Eastalco property north of Adamstown. In addition to defining the geography of this use, the County Executive and County Council specified that the land area for data centers will be limited to less than 1% of the County's total land mass.

The planning tool selected to implement the decision of the County Executive and County Council is a zoning overlay. Properties included in a zoning overlay area continue to have a base zoning designation, such as Agricultural or Limited Industrial, and property owners can continue to use their property in accordance with their zoning. Property owners in the Critical Digital Infrastructure Overlay Zone (CDI-OZ) are not obligated to pursue data center development. It is an option afforded by inclusion in the CDI-OZ when properties also have a Limited Industrial or General Industrial zoning designation.

For properties that do not have Limited Industrial or General Industrial zoning, a zoning map amendment must be requested. Such requests are reviewed by the Planning Commission, which makes a recommendation, and then advance to the County Council for a decision. The County Council has no obligation to grant such requests.

The mechanism for changing community growth area (CGA) boundaries and land use designations is a comprehensive plan amendment. Water and sewer classifications can also be changed through a comprehensive plan amendment. The Livable Frederick Comprehensive Plan includes the Livable Frederick Master Plan, the Comprehensive Plan Map, and area, corridor, and thematic plans.

If a property is added to a community growth area, the County's current practice is to remove the property from the Priority Preservation Area and the Rural Legacy Area via amendments to these maps. This is not required; however, the goals for community growth areas differ from those for preservation areas.

The County makes significant investments in infrastructure to support livability in community growth areas. These investments include parks, water and sewer infrastructure, Transit service, sidewalks, and schools that are walkable and bikeable for students. Preserving large tracts of land in community growth areas is contrary to fostering communities where people can live, work, and enjoy community amenities all in proximity. Additionally, even in right-to-farm communities conflicts with neighboring uses can pose challenges to agricultural operations.

The Priority Preservation Area map identifies the areas of the County with soils most suitable for farming. Preservation efforts are not limited to these areas. The Rural Legacy Area map depicts the geographic extent of eligibility for participation in the Rural Legacy Program, which seeks to preserve cultural and agricultural resources. County and State land preservation programs are voluntary. Property owners in the Priority Preservation Area and the Rural Legacy Area are not obligated to preserve their property.

Consistency with the Livable Frederick Master Plan

The Livable Frederick Master Plan (the Plan) was adopted in September 2019. On Page 43, the Plan describes the area of the decommissioned Eastalco site. Alcoa manufactured aluminum on the site from 1969 until 2005. Closure of the facility in 2010 was followed by demolition of the structures on the property. The Plan states, “This area is currently the largest concentration of undeveloped land in the county zoned for general and/or light industrial development and presents a unique opportunity for future development.”

This is no longer accurate. In 2021, the 2,122-acre Eastalco property was purchased by Quantum Maryland, LLC. Since then, a 1,312-acre area of the property has received preliminary subdivision plan approval and numerous site plans have been approved for the development of a data center campus. Development of data centers in accordance with these site plans is underway. The Eastalco property is now referred to as the Catellus campus.

Seeking to prevent data center sprawl, best utilize existing and planned infrastructure, and ensure that industrial land elsewhere in the County is available for target industries such as life sciences, County Executive Fitzwater and the County Council announced in May of 2025 that data centers will be limited to the Eastalco area. This will be accomplished via the creation of a Critical Digital Infrastructure Overlay Zone (CDI-OZ). No changes to underlying zoning are proposed with this amendment. Thus, development will be phased as requests for industrial zoning in the CDI-OZ where it does not currently exist are considered by the County Council.

Creation of the CDI-OZ to create predictability for the community and the data center industry, and to support other industries with industrial land needs, is supported by several Plan goals and initiatives. These include:

Attract, retain, and grow opportunities to create a business climate in Frederick County that is attractive to firms and supportive of the many diverse groups of people, with diverse expertise and experiences, who wish to live and work in Frederick County. (Livable Frederick Master Plan, p. 160)

Ensure the availability of a diverse inventory of appropriate potential business locations to meet the demands of a growing and diverse business community. (Livable Frederick Master Plan, p. 163)

Work to expand opportunities in knowledge-based industries – those industries where production and services are based on a vast knowledge of technical and scientific skills, with workers highly skilled in those areas – such as information technology, life and natural sciences, and other new and emerging technical business opportunities. (Livable Frederick Master Plan, p. 165)

Maryland's Planning Principles

In 2025, the Planning Principles Act ([SB 266](#)) replaced the 12 Planning Visions with the 8 Sustainable Growth Planning Principles. Effective October 1, 2025, [Land Use Article Section 1-201](#) requires a planning commission to implement the Principles through the comprehensive plan. Frederick County affirms that the Livable Frederick Comprehensive Plan, which includes but is not limited to the Comprehensive Plan Map, the Livable Frederick Master Plan (2019), the Sugarloaf Treasured Landscape Management Plan (2022), the South Frederick Corridors Plan (2024), the Water Resources Element (2025), and the subject amendment, implements the following Principles through active partnerships with stakeholders, planning processes, analyses, policies, and actions that enable sustainable communities, protect the environment, and foster a high quality of life.

Maryland's Planning Principles

LAND	Optimize productivity of working landscapes , including farms and forests and fisheries , and prioritize development within population centers that are in proximity to existing infrastructure and facilities.
TRANSPORTATION	Prioritize transportation networks that create energy efficient, affordable and reliable access to jobs, housing and services.
HOUSING	Enable a mix of quality housing types and affordability options to accommodate all who want to live in the state.
ECONOMY	Allow for adaptive reuse, mixed-use and context appropriate new development that responds to changing markets and innovations.
EQUITY	Engage all sectors of the community in plan development to ensure diverse voices are heard and the needs of underserved populations are prioritized.
RESILIENCE	Integrate resiliency measures that will minimize the impacts of rapid and unexpected natural- and human-caused threats on communities.
PLACE	Provide for public spaces that encourage social interaction and value cultural, historical and natural resources .
ECOLOGY	Protect and restore sensitive ecological systems and conserve natural resources , including forests, agricultural areas, and waterways.

Current Conditions - Eastalco Community Growth Area

The Eastalco Community Growth Area is 2,219 acres in size. It is located north of the Adamstown Community Growth Area and west of the South Frederick Corridors Community Growth Area. It includes the former Eastalco holdings, the Agro Drive industrial park, and Stanford Industrial Park. It also includes the property known as Noffsinger, which is between the aforementioned industrial parks, and the property known as Windridge, which adjoins the Agro Drive industrial park and the Noffsinger property to the south.

Land use and zoning designations, and their associated acreage, in the Eastalco Community Growth Area are as follows:

Table 1: Existing Land Use and Zoning Acres

Land Use	Acres	Zoning	Acres
General Industrial	1,592	General Industrial	1,523
Limited Industrial	400	Limited Industrial	415
Natural Resources	167	Agricultural	222
Right-of-Way	60	Right-of-Way	60

The Agricultural zoning is limited to the Windridge property, which has a Limited Industrial land use designation and was the subject of a zoning map amendment request for General Industrial zoning (R-22-03). The County Council denied this request in May of 2023. A factor in the denial was the lack of actual physical change in the neighborhood. The Council Resolution denying the request characterized the change that had occurred at that time as “paper change,” citing change in ownership of the Eastalco property, changes to the County zoning regulations, and changes to the water and sewer classification of the property.

The westernmost 74 acres of the Windridge property are included in the Rural Legacy Area. Prior to 2012, this area was not included in the Eastalco Community Growth Area. There is also a small area of Rural Legacy on the existing data center campus property, near where the terminus of Happy Landing Road is shown.

All properties in the Eastalco Community Growth Area are in the water and sewer service area, with designations ranging from Planned Service to W-3/S-3.

Current conditions are shown on Maps 3, 5, 7, 9, and 11.

Planning Commission Recommended Comprehensive Plan Amendment and Zoning Map Amendment

The Planning Commission conducted workshops on the subject Comprehensive Plan Amendment and Zoning Map Amendment on July 16, 2025 and July 23, 2025. The Planning Commission public hearing on the amendments was held on October 15, 2025, and was followed by Commission discussion that was continued to October 22, 2025. In a series of votes at the October 22, 2025 meeting, the Planning Commission finalized their recommendations to the County Council.

Development of the CDI-OZ and the associated Livable Frederick Comprehensive Plan amendment included consideration of:

- The proximity of existing industrial areas, such as quarries and industrial parks.
- The proximity of the Eastalco Community Growth Area boundary.
- The proximity of necessary infrastructure, including existing or planned public water and data conveyance infrastructure.
- Minimizing impacts to the Adamstown community.

The Planning Commission considered these factors, applicable State and County laws, and the testimony, exhibits, and documentary evidence produced at the public meetings and the public hearing, including all oral and written testimony and submissions.

Summary of Recommendations

The Planning Commission recommended limiting the CDI-OZ to the area of the Catellus campus with preliminary plan approval, the Noffsinger property, the Windridge property, and the properties labeled “1, 2, 9” on a map included in the July 2025 Draft Amendment, which is included in the Appendix. The Catellus campus currently includes properties owned by Catellus, Rowan, and Aligned. The recommended area of the CDI-OZ is shown on Maps 1, 2, and 6.

The Planning Commission further recommended addition of properties “a-d” and “1, 2, 9” to the Eastalco Community Growth Area, which already includes the Noffsinger property, the Windridge property, and most – but not all – of the Catellus campus shown on the approved preliminary plan. Notably, one area shown on the approved preliminary plan on the north side of Manor Woods Road, opposite St. Joseph’s on Carrollton Manor, is not included in the Eastalco Community Growth Area and has Agricultural land use and zoning designations. The Agricultural zoning is noted on the approved preliminary plan. This area is not included in the recommended CDI-OZ.

With the Planning Commission recommended additions, the area of the Eastalco Community Growth Area would increase to 2,268.83 acres and the area of the CDI-OZ would be 1,585.8 acres, which is 0.37% of the County’s total land area.

The Planning Commission also recommended removal from the Rural Legacy Area and the Priority Preservation Area all properties or parts thereof currently in the Eastalco Community Growth Area and that are recommended for addition to the Eastalco Community Growth Area with this Amendment.

The Planning Commission recommendations – including changes to land use designations and water and sewer classifications – are described in greater detail in the following sections.

RECOMMENDED ADDITIONS TO THE EASTALCO GROWTH AREA, BUT NOT THE CRITICAL DIGITAL INFRASTRUCTURE OVERLAY ZONE (CDI-OZ)

Expansion of the Eastalco Community Growth Area is recommended; however, not all properties recommended for addition to the growth area are recommended for inclusion in the CDI-OZ. Properties to be added to the Eastalco Growth Area that are not recommended for inclusion in the CDI-OZ are listed in Table 2 and identified with lower case letters on Maps 1 and 2.

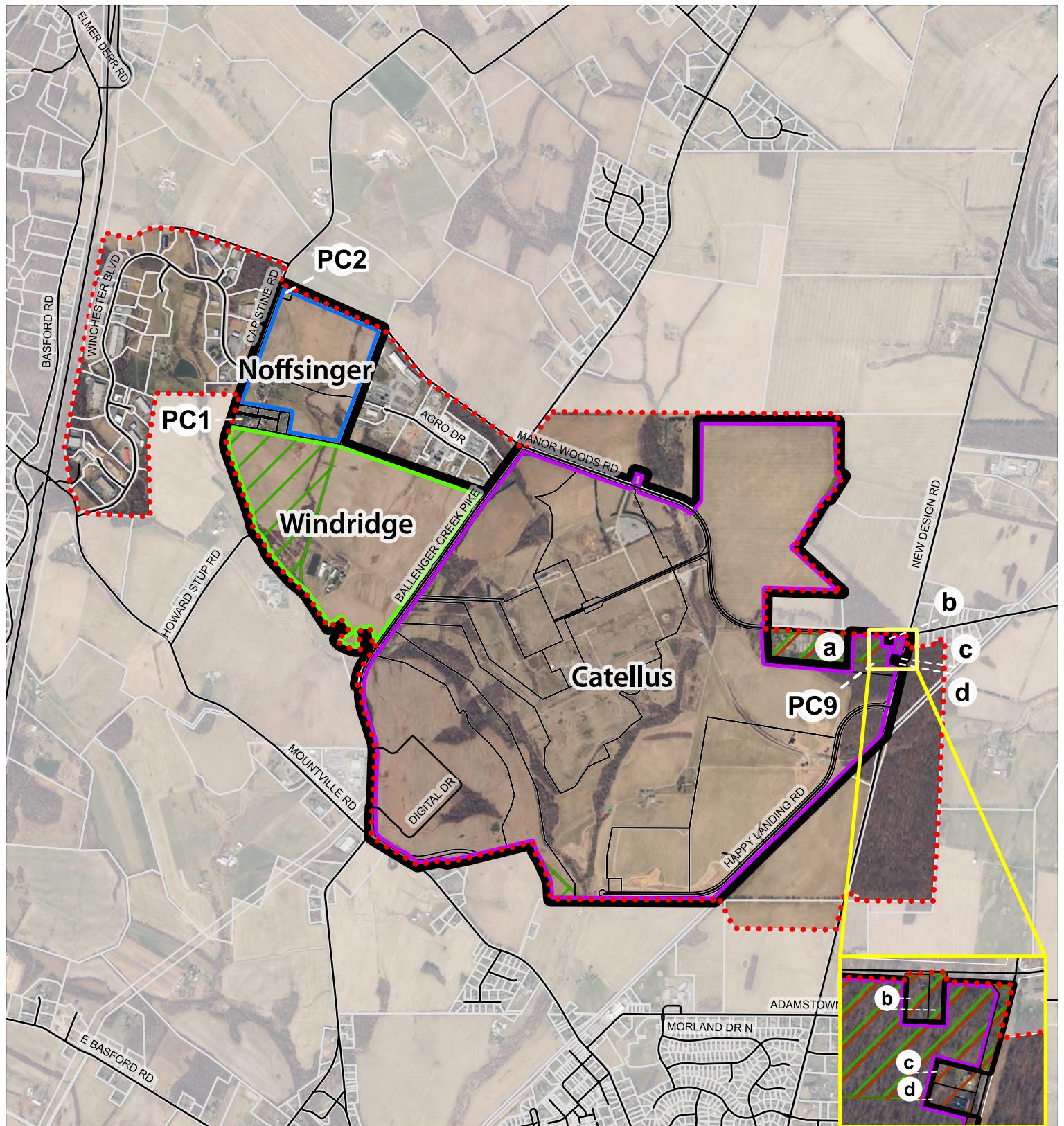
Inclusion of these properties in the Eastalco Community Growth Area, combined with application of a land use designation other than Agricultural, would allow for connection to public water and sewer if there is available capacity and the property owners are so interested. Accordingly, a change from No Planned Service to Planned Service is recommended in the water and sewer classifications. Planned Service means that service is expected to occur in the next 20 years.

The parcel labeled "a" is improved with a house of worship, St. Joseph's on Carrollton Manor. There is no land use designation specific to this use. The "Institutional" land use designation is applied to public facilities like public schools, libraries, and fire stations. In rural areas, houses of worship generally have an Agricultural land use designation. A review of houses of worship in growth areas shows facilities with General Commercial, Village Center, Low Density Residential, and Medium Density Residential land use designations. A land use designation of Low Density Residential is recommended for this property.

Likewise, Low Density Residential is recommended for the property identified as "b", which is two lots under the same ownership (0.46 acres and 0.34 acres). This property is improved with a single-family residence that was built in 1953. Low Density Residential is also recommended for the properties identified as "c" and "d", each of which is improved with a single-family residence with the residence on "c" built in 1955 and the residence on "d" built in 1953. These three residences pre-date the industrial zoning of the Eastalco property, which was applied in the 1960s. They are located on the eastern edge of the expanded growth area in an area that is largely wooded.

No changes to current zoning designations, which is Agricultural for all four properties, are recommended.

Despite their size and use, these properties are currently in the Rural Legacy Area and the Priority Preservation Area. Removal from those areas is recommended for these properties, as well as the Windridge Property and the corner of the data center campus where the terminus of Happy Landing Road is shown. As discussed previously, Priority Preservation and Rural Legacy areas have different goals than community growth areas. In addition, most of the properties are not used for agriculture and do not align with the criteria guidelines for either program.



Map 1: Recommended Critical Digital Infrastructure (CDI) Overlay Zone

	Priority Preservation Areas in Proposed CDI &/or CGA
	Rural Legacy Areas in Proposed CDI &/or CGA
	Catellus
	Noffsinger
	Proposed CDI Overlay Zone

CDI Acres	% of County
1,585.8	0.37
PPA Acres	RLA Acres
35.4	113



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0 0.2 0.4 0.8 Miles



Table 2: Properties Recommended for Addition to Eastalco CGA, Not Recommended for Inclusion in CDI-OZ

Properties recommended for addition to the Eastalco Community Growth Area, but not recommended for inclusion in the CDI-OZ.

Map Label	Acres	Land Use Change Acres	Current Land Use Designation	Proposed Land Use Designation	Current Water & Sewer Classification	Proposed Water & Sewer Classification
a	21.86	21.86	Agricultural / Rural	Low Density Residential	No Planned Service	Planned Service
b	0.80	0.80	Agricultural / Rural	Low Density Residential	No Planned Service	Planned Service
c	0.44	0.44	Agricultural / Rural	Low Density Residential	No Planned Service	Planned Service
d	0.45	0.45	Agricultural / Rural	Low Density Residential	No Planned Service	Planned Service
Total	23.55					

PROPERTIES ALREADY WITHIN THE EASTALCO COMMUNITY GROWTH AREA AND RECOMMENDED FOR ADDITION TO THE CRITICAL DIGITAL INFRASTRUCTURE OVERLAY ZONE (CDI-OZ)

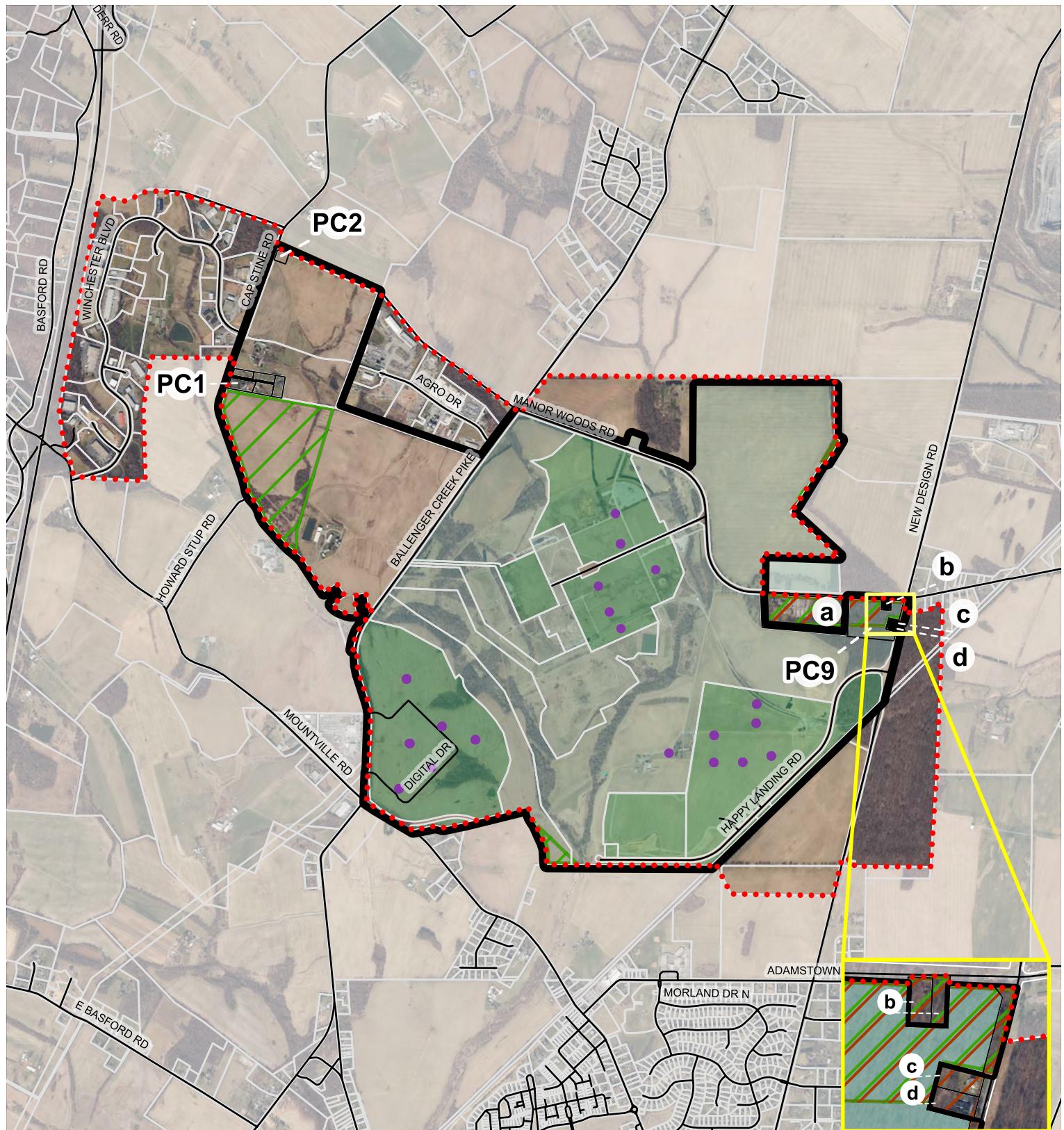
Properties already within the Eastalco Community Growth Area recommended for inclusion in the CDI-OZ are limited to the area of the Catellus campus with preliminary plan approval, the majority of the Noffsinger property (94.64 acres), and the Windridge property. These properties identified by name on Map 1. The area of preliminary plan approval, site plan approvals, and issued building permits for the Catellus campus are shown on Map 2.

Within the current Eastalco Community Growth Area, 636.53 acres are recommended to be excluded from the CDI-OZ. These properties are the aforementioned Agro Drive industrial park (94.04 acres) and Stanford Industrial Park (258.30 acres). These industrial parks are largely developed and provide much needed space for a variety of businesses, including those that require outdoor storage. Also not included in the CDI-OZ are five properties totaling 201.39 acres with General Industrial and Limited Industrial zoning in the area of New Design Road and the railroad tracks, as well as 82.803 acres of General Industrial north of Manor Woods Road at Ballenger Creek Pike.

RECOMMENDED ADDITIONS TO THE EASTALCO COMMUNITY GROWTH AREA AND THE CRITICAL DIGITAL INFRASTRUCTURE OVERLAY ZONE (CDI-OZ)

Properties recommended for addition to the Eastalco Community Growth Area and inclusion in the CDI-OZ are listed in Table 3 and identified with “PC” numbers on Maps 1 and 2.

Property “PC1” is a 5-lot minor subdivision. Four of the five lots are improved with single-family residences that were built between 1997 and 2014. Ownership of these lots transferred to the owner of the larger Noffsinger property in 2024. Property “PC2” was once a separate parcel that has since been consolidated with the Noffsinger property. It has General Industrial land use and zoning, but is not currently included in the Eastalco Community Growth Area.



Map 2: Proposed CDI Overlay Zone, Properties



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0 0.2 0.4 0.8 Miles



	Priority Preservation Areas in Proposed CDI &/or CGA		Proposed CDI Overlay Zone
	Rural Legacy Areas in Proposed CDI &/or CGA		Proposed Community Growth Area
	Preliminary Plan		
	Site Plan		
●	Issued Building Permit		
		CDI Acres	% of County
		1,585.8	0.37
		PPA Acres	RLA Acres
		35.4	113

Property "PC9" adjoins the growth area to the east along New Design Road and is part of a larger tract that already has an industrial land use designation and industrial zoning.

Regarding land use designation changes, a change from Agricultural to General Industrial is recommended for property "PC1" and a change from Agricultural to Limited Industrial is recommended for property "PC9."

No changes to current zoning designations are recommended. Property "PC2" is zoned General Industrial; properties "PC1" and "PC9" have an Agricultural zoning designation.

Properties "PC1" and "PC9" are currently classified as No Planned Service for water and sewer service. The Planned Service classification is recommended. For property "PC2" W-5/Dev, S-5/Dev is recommended.

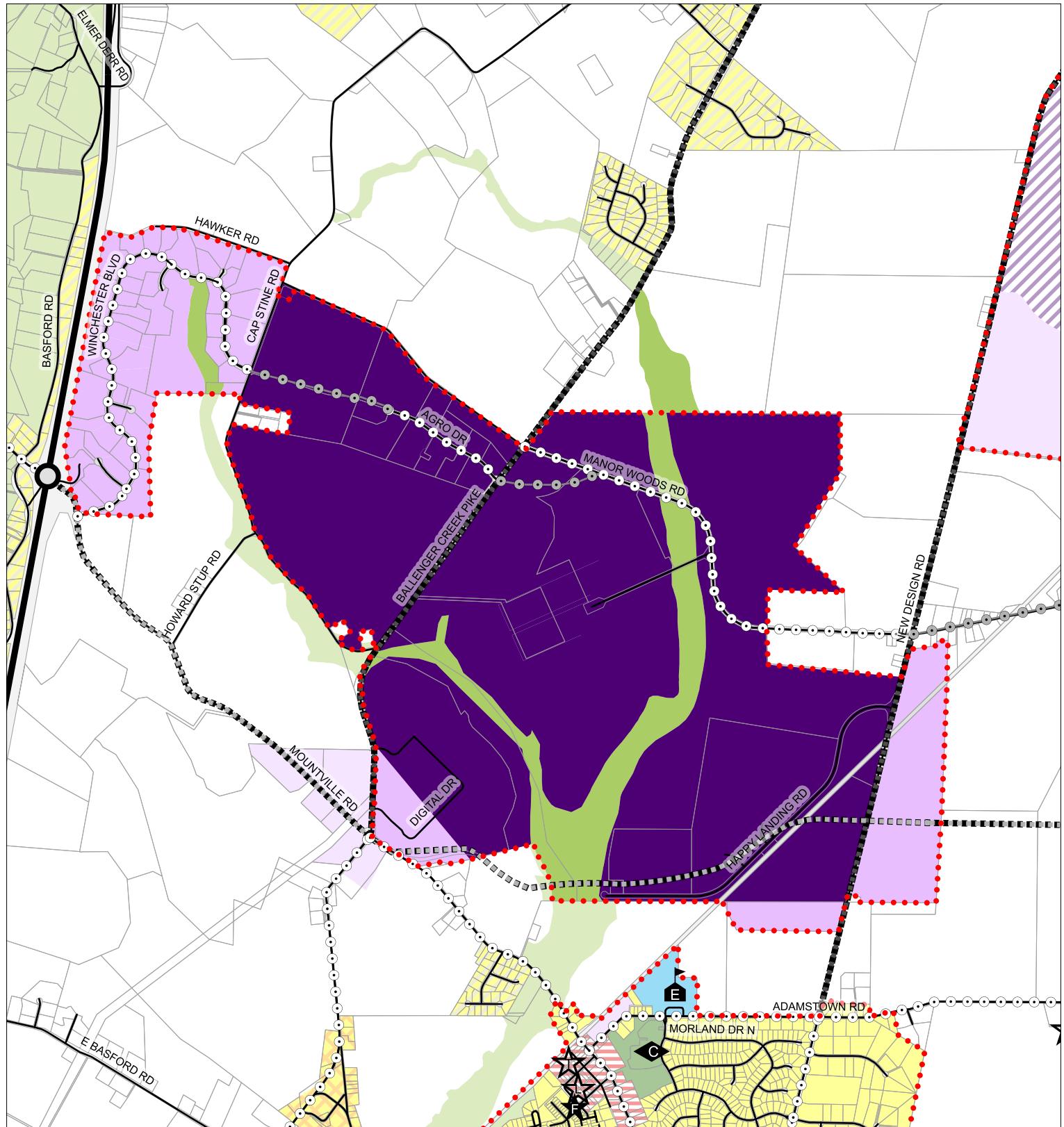
Property "PC9" is in the Rural Legacy Area and the Priority Preservation Area. Map revisions to remove this property from the preservation areas are recommended.

The recommended changes to the Comprehensive Plan Map, Zoning Map, water service areas, sewer service areas, Priority Preservation Area, and Rural Legacy Area are shown on Maps 4, 6, 8, 10, and 12.

Table 3: Properties Recommended for Inclusion in the Eastalco CGA and CDI-OZ

Properties recommended for inclusion in the Eastalco Community Growth Area and the CDI-OZ.

Map Label	Total Acres	Land Use Change Acres	Current Land Use Designation	Proposed Land Use Designation	Current Water & Sewer Classification	Proposed Water & Sewer Classification
PC1	7.86	7.86	Agricultural	General Industrial	No Planned Service	Planned Service
PC2	1.11	1.11	General Industrial	-	No Planned Service	W-5/Dev, S-5/Dev
PC9	571.38	13.15	Agricultural	Limited Industrial	No Planned Service	Planned Service
Total Acres		22.12				



Map 3: Current Comprehensive Plan Map



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Community Growth Areas



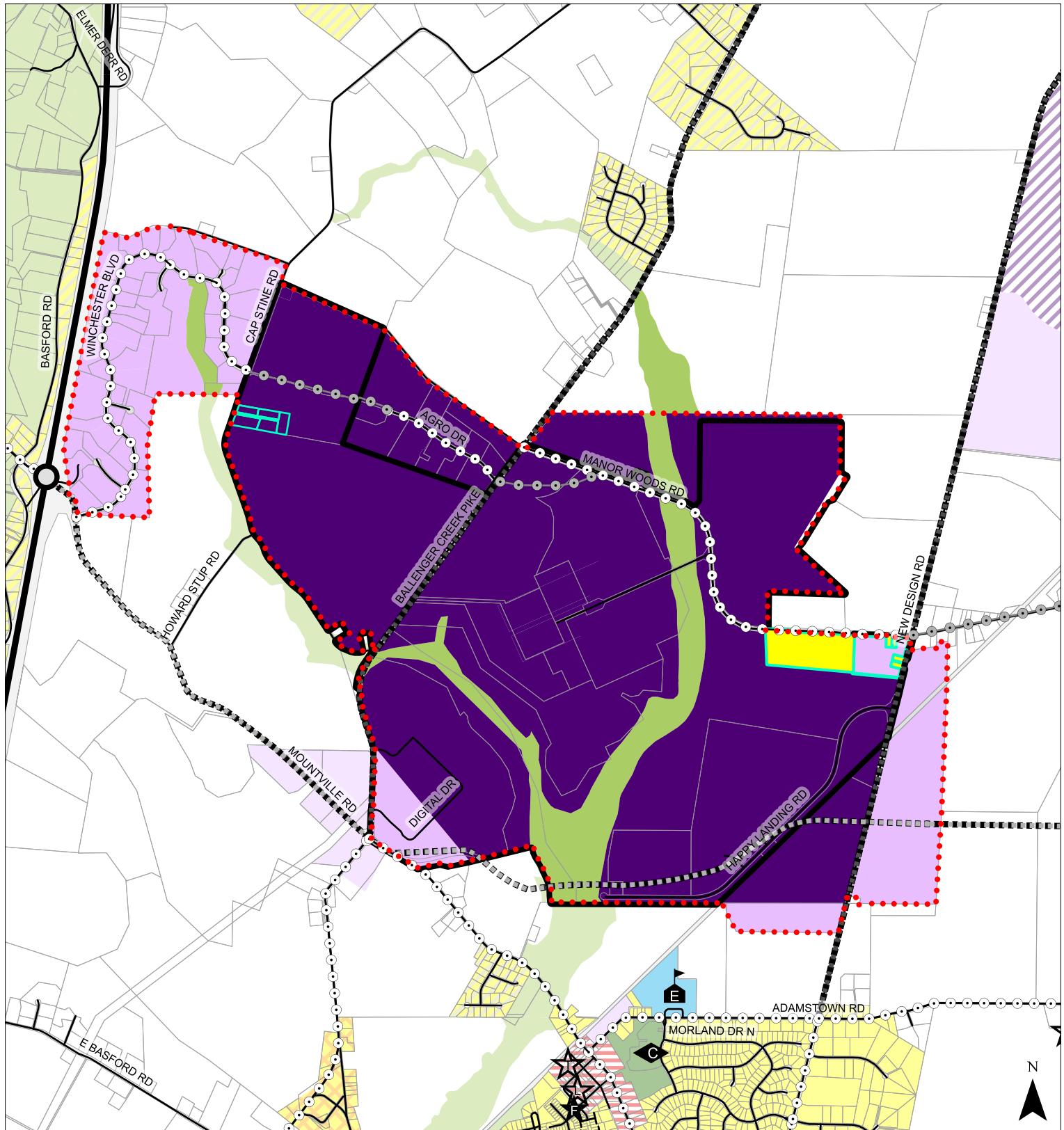
Land Use Designations

The legend identifies eight land use categories, each associated with a unique color and pattern:

- Agricultural / Rural (White)
- Natural Resource (Light Green)
- Public Parkland / Open Space (Dark Green)
- Rural Community (Yellow with diagonal lines)
- Rural Residential (Yellow with horizontal lines)
- Low Density Res. (Yellow)
- Village Center (Red with horizontal lines)
- Limited Industrial (Light Purple)
- General Industrial (Dark Purple)
- Mineral Mining (Purple with diagonal lines)
- Institutional (Blue)

0 0.2 0.4

N



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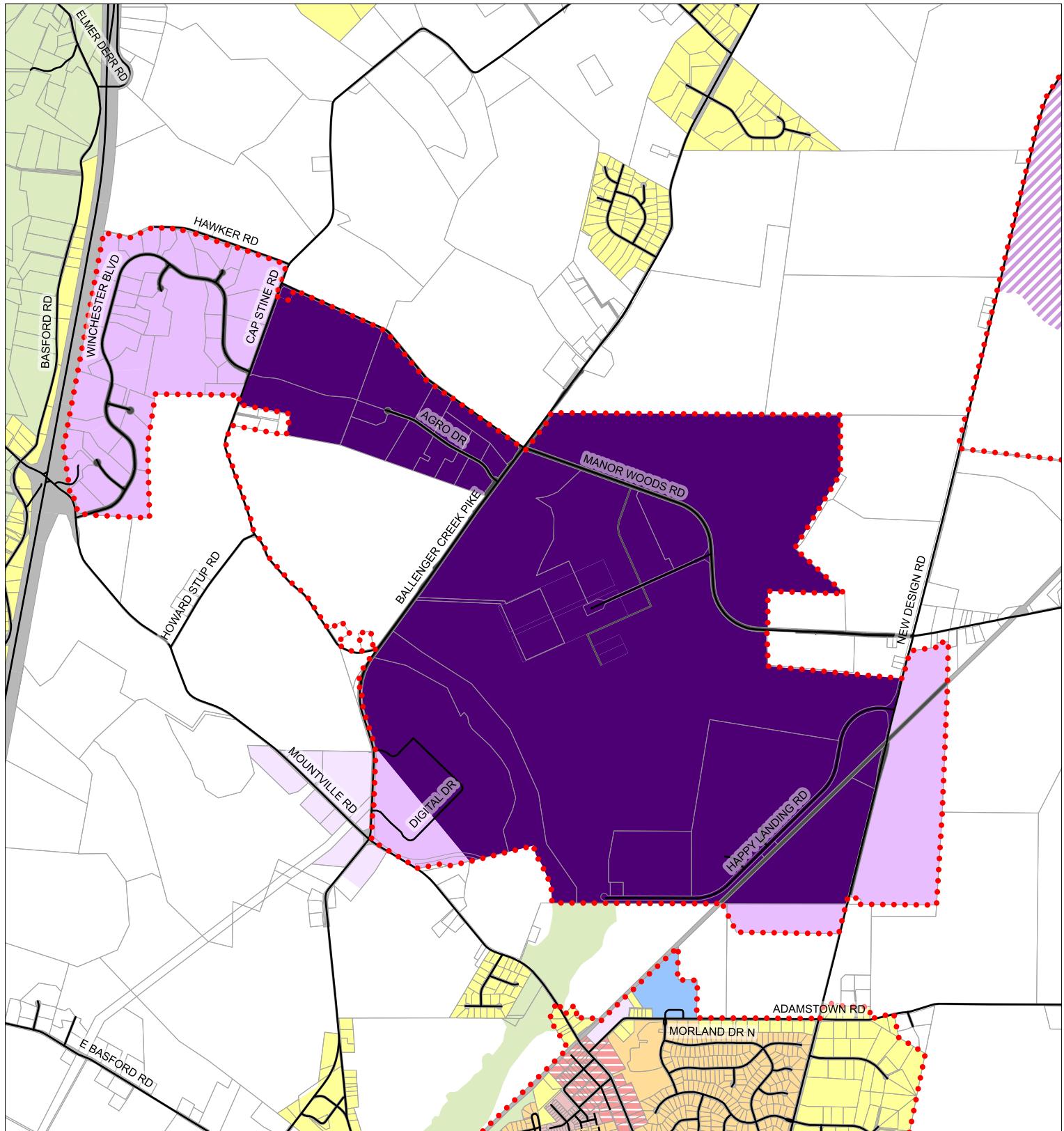


0 0.2 0.4 0.8 Miles

Proposed Community Growth Area
Proposed Land Use Change Parcels- Ag to LI
Proposed Land Use Change Parcels- AG to GI
Proposed Land Use Change Parcels- Ag to LDR
Proposed CDI Overlay Zone

Land Use Designations

- Agricultural / Rural
- Natural Resource
- Public Parkland / Open Space
- Rural Community
- Mineral Mining
- Institutional
- Low Density Res.
- Village Center
- Limited Industrial
- General Industrial
- Rural Residential



Map 5: Current Zoning



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Community Growth Areas

A 3x3 grid of nine red dots, arranged in three rows and three columns.

Zoning Districts

A – Agricultural

RC – Resource Conservation

R1 – Low Density Residential

R3 – Low Density Re

PUD – Planned U

 VC – Village Center

GI – General Industrial

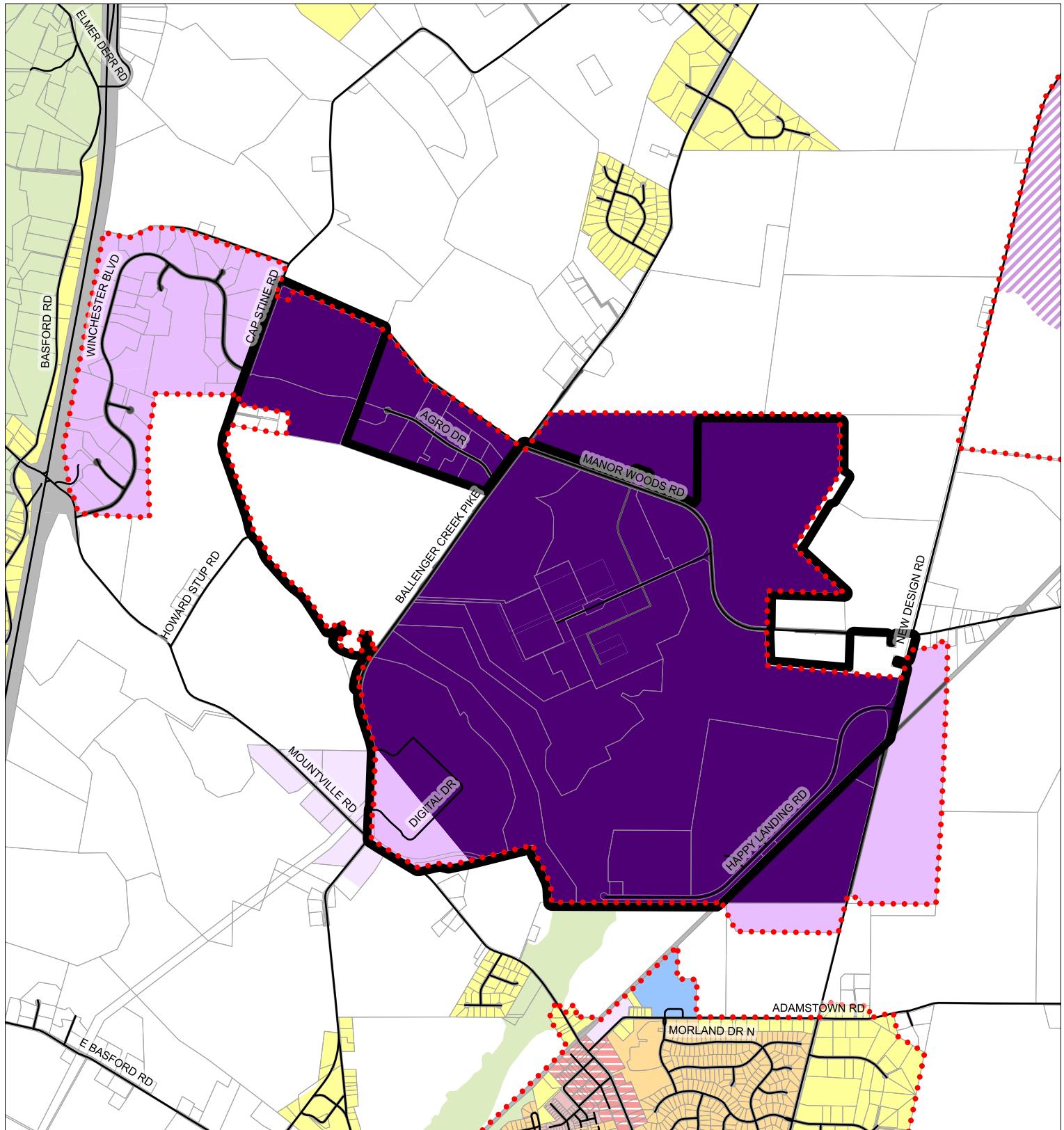
LI – Limited Industrial

 MM – Mineral Mining

Ie - Institution

0 0.2 0.4

N



Map 6: Proposed Zoning

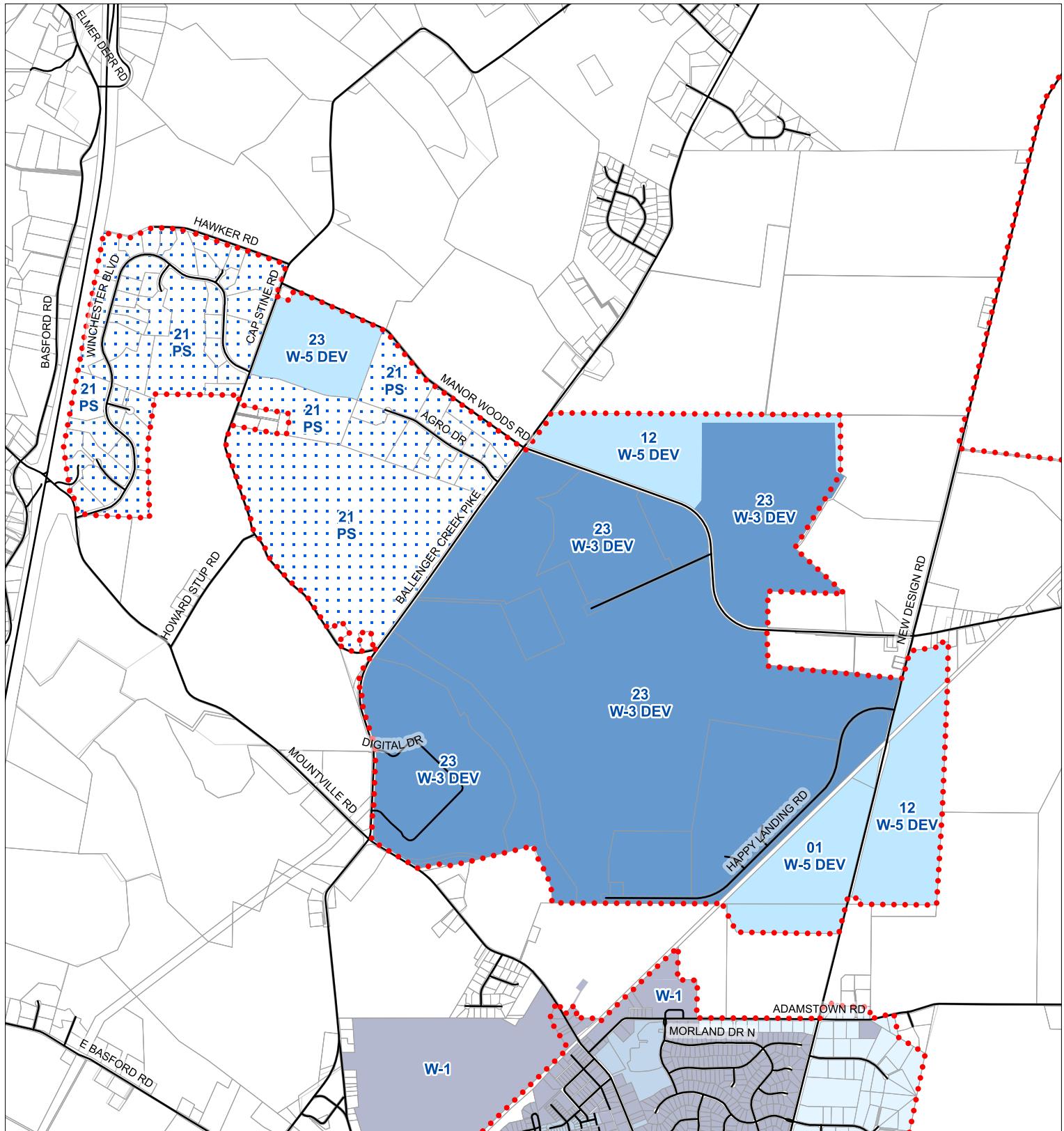


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0 0.2 0.4 0.8 Miles

Zoning Districts	
■	VC – Village Center
■	A – Agricultural
■	GI – General Industrial
■	RC – Resource Conservation
■	LI – Limited Industrial
■	R1 – Low Density Residential
■	MM – Mineral Mining
■	R3 – Low Density Residential
■	Ie - Institutional
■	PUD – Planned Unit Development
■	Right of Way
○	Community Growth Areas
■	Proposed CDI Overlay Zone



Map 7: Current Water Service Areas

Water Service Areas

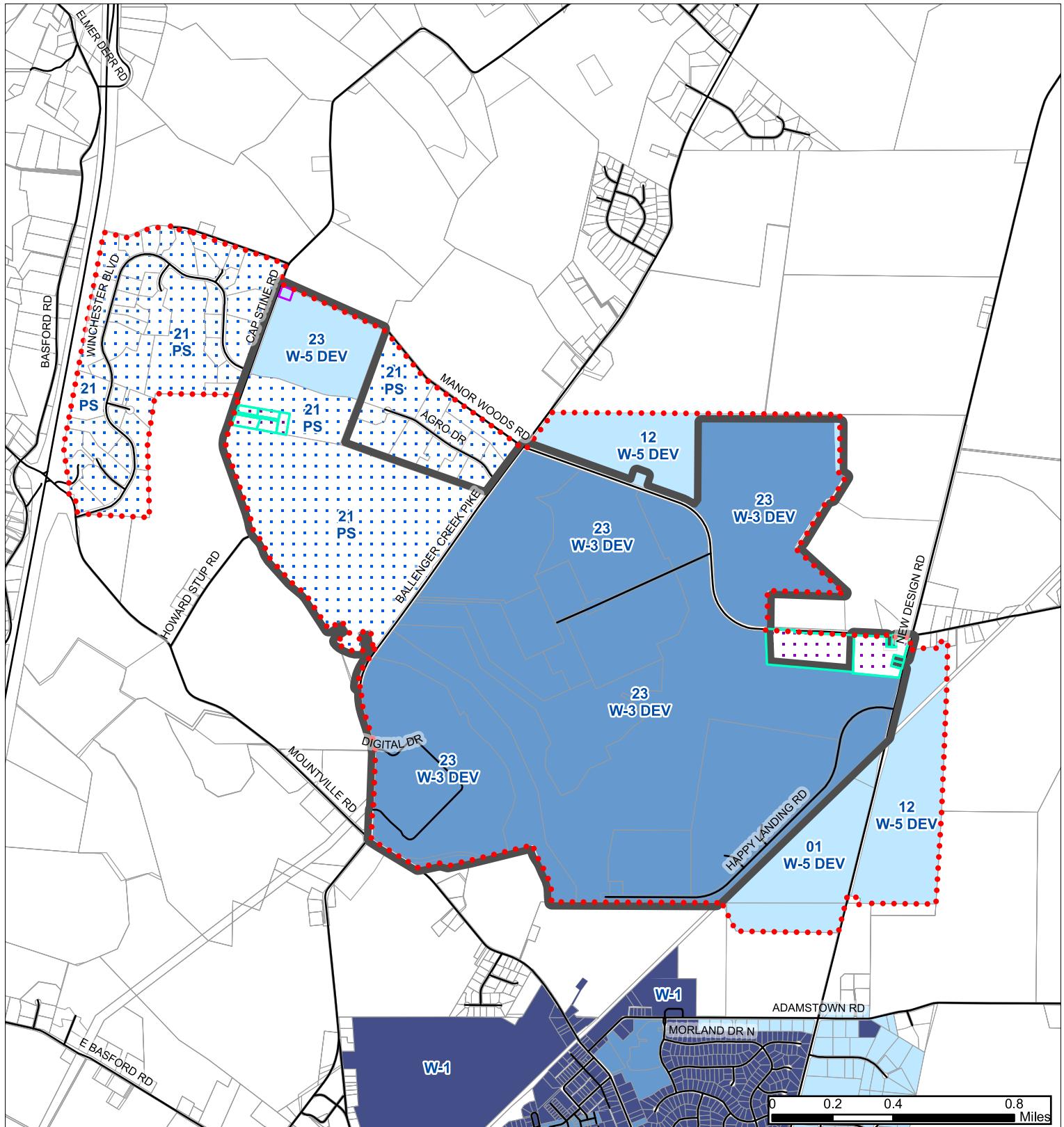
- White: No Planned Service
- Dark Blue: W-1- Connected
- Medium Blue: W-3- 1-3 Years
- Light Blue: W-5- 7-10 Years
- Dashed Blue: Planned Service- 11-20 Years
- Red Dashed Line: Community Growth Area



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0 0.2 0.4 0.8 Miles





Map 8: Proposed Water Service Areas



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0 0.2 0.4 0.8 Miles



Proposed Community Growth Areas

Proposed CDI Overlay Zone

Water Service Areas Proposed

W-5 DEV, 7-10 Years

Planned Service

Water Service Areas

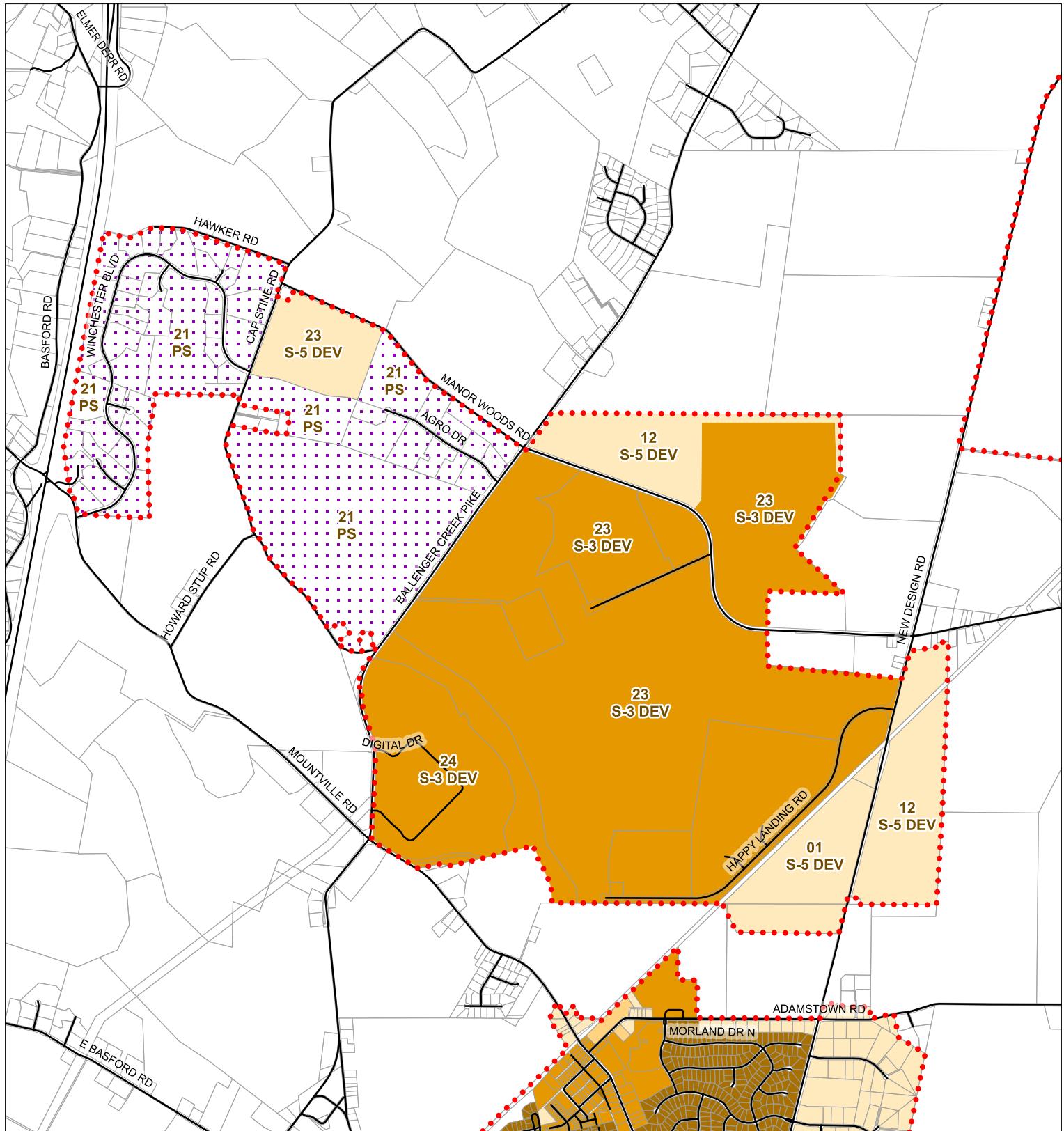
No Planned Service- No Planned Service

W-1- Connected

W-3- 1-3 Years

W-5- 7-10 Years

Planned Service- 11-20 Years



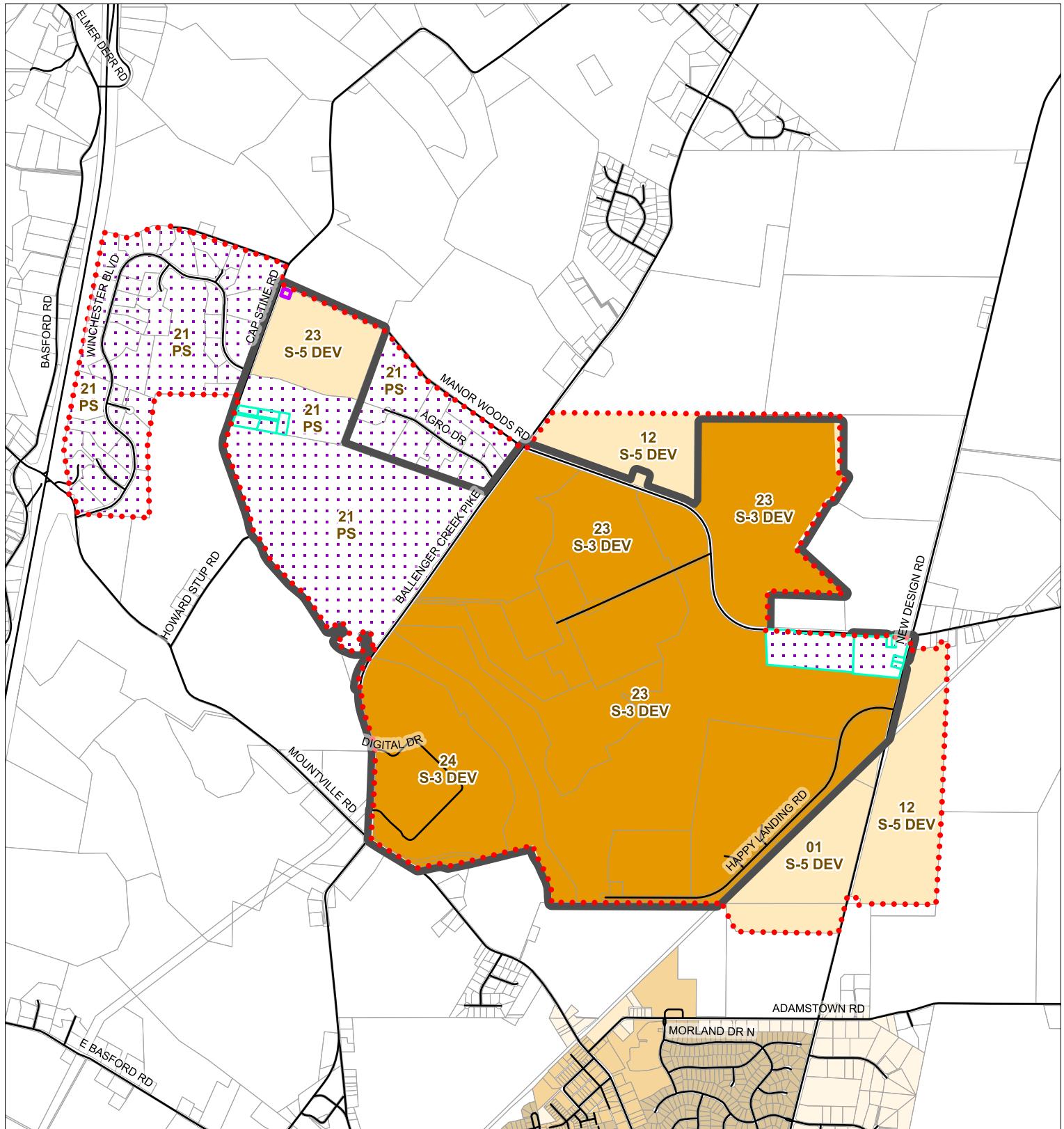
Map 9: Current Sewer Service Areas



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0 0.2 0.4 0.8 Miles



Map 10: Proposed Sewer Service Areas



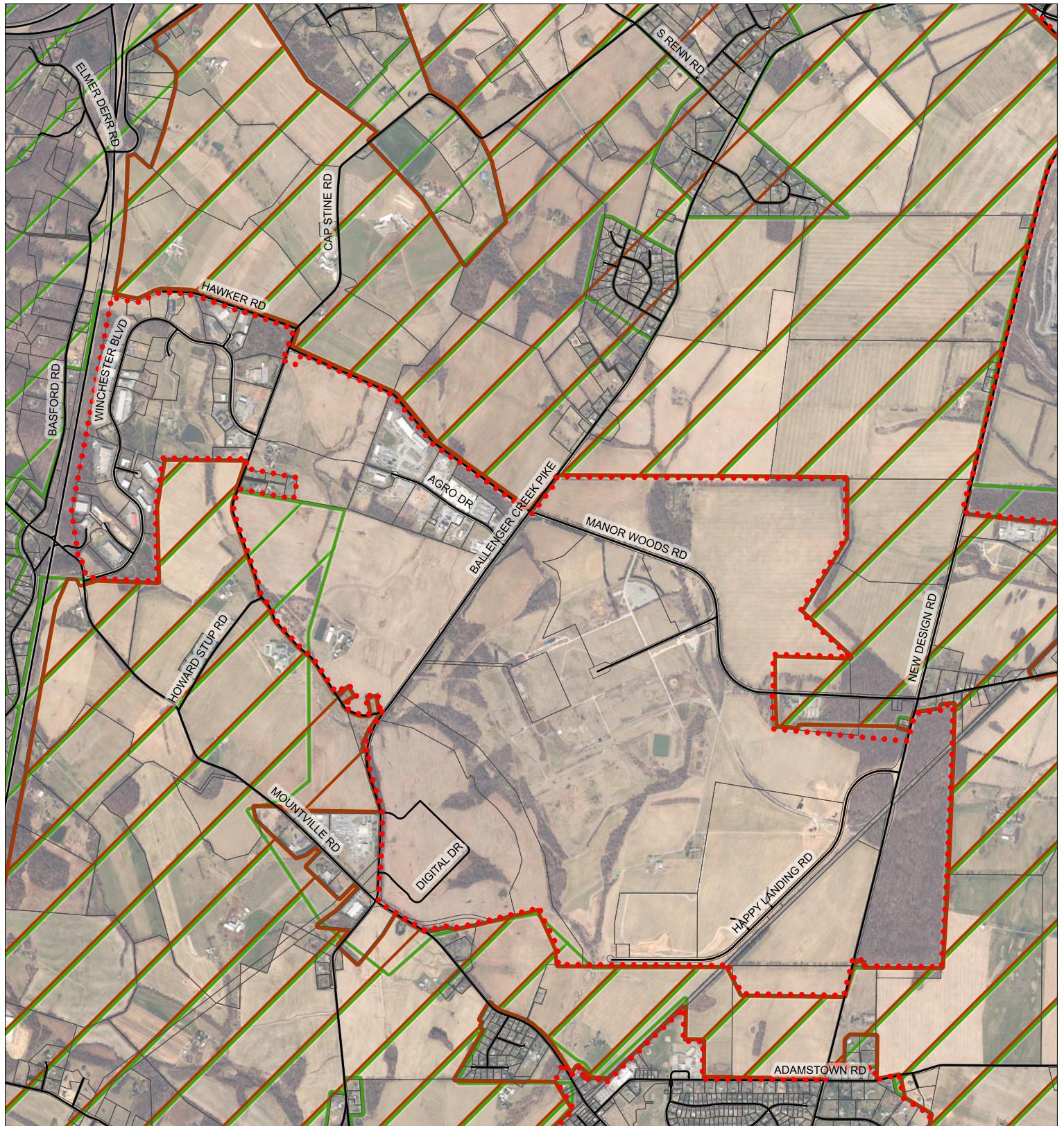
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0 0.2 0.4 0.8 Miles



- Proposed Community Growth Areas
- Proposed CDI Overlay Zone
- Sewer Service Areas Proposed
 - S-5 DEV, 7-10 Years
 - Planned Service

- Sewer Service Areas
 - NPS-No Planned Service
 - S-1- Connected
 - S-3- 1-3 Years
 - S-4- 4-6 Years
 - S-5- 7-10 Years
 - PS- Planned Service



Map 11: Current Agricultural Preservation Areas

Priority Preservation Areas
(eligible, not necessarily preserved)

Rural Legacy Areas
(eligible, not necessarily preserved)

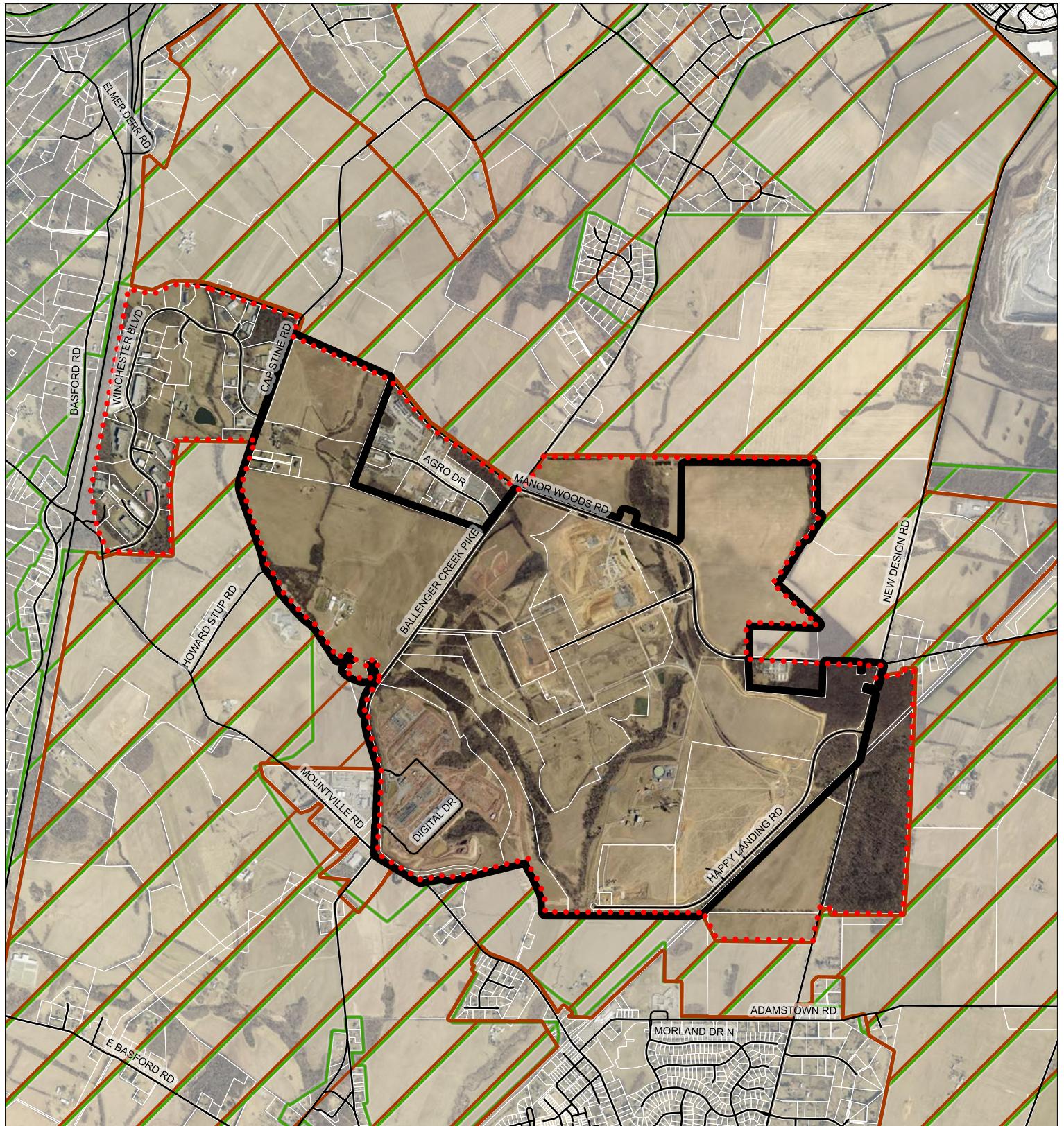
Community Growth Area



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0 0.2 0.4 0.8 Miles





**Map 12: Proposed Agricultural
Preservation Areas**

- \ Proposed Priority
Preservation Areas
- \ Proposed Rural Legacy
Areas
- \ Proposed CDI Overlay Zone
- \ Proposed Community
Growth Areas

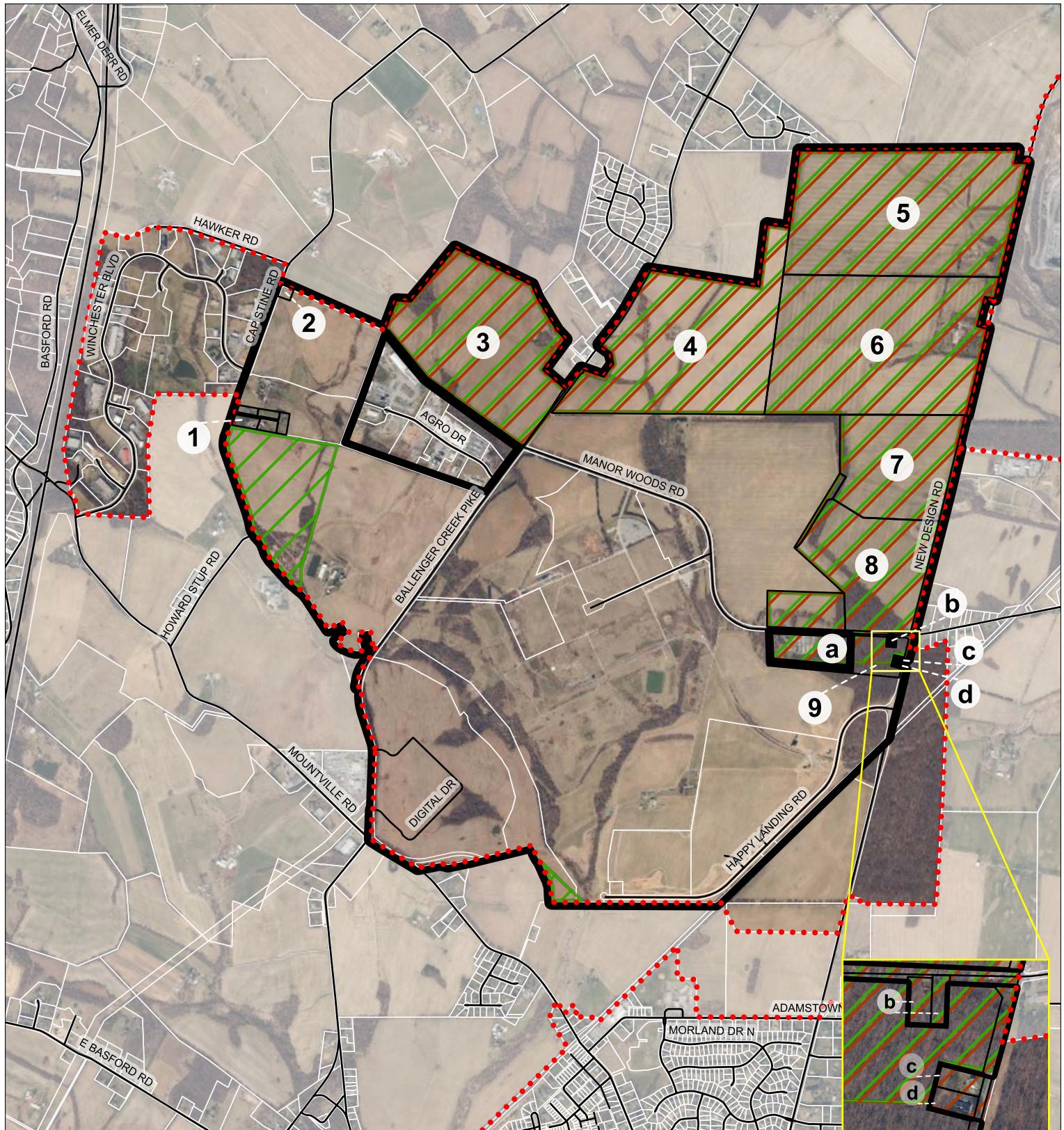


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0 0.2 0.4 0.8 Miles



Appendix



Map 13: JULY 2025 DRAFT - Critical Digital Infrastructure (CDI) Overlay Zone

	Priority Preservation Areas in Proposed CGA (eligible, not preserved)		Proposed CDI Overlay Zone
	Rural Legacy Areas in Proposed CGA (eligible, not preserved)		CDI Acres % of County
			2,566.4 0.60



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0 0.2 0.4 0.8 Miles



JULY 2025 DRAFT

Table 1 - Additions to Eastalco CGA, Not Included in CDI-OZ

Map Label	Acres	Land Use Change Acres	Current Land Use Designation	Proposed Land Use Designation	Current Water & Sewer Classification	Proposed Water & Sewer Classification
a	21.86	21.86	Agricultural / Rural	Low Density Residential	No Planned Service	Planned Service
b	0.80	0.80	Agricultural / Rural	Low Density Residential	No Planned Service	Planned Service
c	0.44	0.44	Agricultural / Rural	Low Density Residential	No Planned Service	Planned Service
d	0.45	0.45	Agricultural / Rural	Low Density Residential	No Planned Service	Planned Service
Total Acres		23.55				

Table 2 – Proposed Inclusions to Eastalco CGA and CDI-OZ

Map Label	Total Acres	Land Use Change Acres	Current Land Use Designation	Proposed Land Use Designation	Current Water & Sewer Classification	Proposed Water & Sewer Classification
1	7.86	7.86	Agricultural	General Industrial	No Planned Service	Planned Service
2	1.11	1.11	General Industrial	-	No Planned Service	W-5/Dev, S-5/ Dev
3	141.62	141.62	Agricultural	Limited Industrial	No Planned Service	Planned Service
4	423.92	163.21	Agricultural, Natural Resource	Limited Industrial, Natural Resource	No Planned Service	Planned Service
5	195.34	195.34	Agricultural	Limited Industrial	No Planned Service	Planned Service
6	201.60	201.60	Agricultural	Limited Industrial	No Planned Service	Planned Service
7	80.87	80.87	Agricultural	Limited Industrial	No Planned Service	Planned Service
8	82.91	82.91	Agricultural	Limited Industrial	No Planned Service	Planned Service
9	571.38	13.15	Agricultural	Limited Industrial	No Planned Service	Planned Service
Total Acres		887.67				



Division of
Planning and Permitting
Livable Frederick Planning and Design Office

Frederick County
Government *Maryland*