

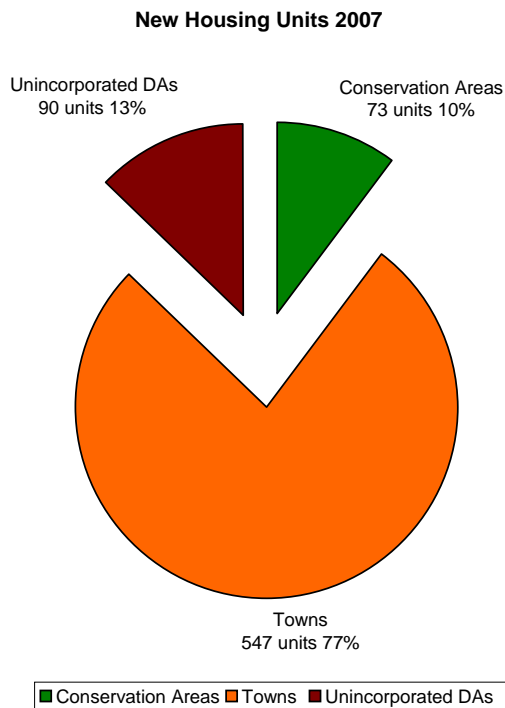
CASE STUDY: Montgomery County Growth Areas

Montgomery County established growth areas in its 2004 comprehensive plan and set specific goals for directing new development into those areas. Because Montgomery is home to two large towns (Christiansburg and Blacksburg) and is adjacent to the City of Radford, multi-jurisdictional cooperation is a hallmark of local planning efforts and a key to the successful implementation of its growth areas.

The county's goal is 93 percent of its future growth to occur in about 20 percent of its land area. The growth area is comprised of:

- the towns of Blacksburg and Christiansburg;
- the Urban Expansion Area;
- the Villages and Village Expansion Area; and
- the Residential Transition Area.

The towns are slated to accommodate two-thirds of the county's growth on about 10 percent of its land area. Additional growth areas around the towns and the city and established villages (called Urban and Village Expansion Areas, and the Residential Transition Areas) are targeted for about 27 percent of the county's growth on about 10 percent of its land area. Rural Areas and Resource Stewardship Areas are to receive about six percent or less of the county's growth on about 80 percent of its land area.



A snap shot of residential growth that occurred in 2007 suggests success in targeting growth:

- 90 percent of new homes were built in the towns or unincorporated development areas
- The "conservation" areas (rural and resource stewardship combined) received only 10 percent of the new homes.

The towns received 77 percent of all new homes, greatly exceeding the target of two thirds.

However, for the other 1/3 of new growth planned for allocation to development areas within the unincorporated area of the county, only 55 percent of these new homes were built in development areas, falling short of the county's goal of targeting 80 percent to the development areas.

Montgomery introduced sliding scale zoning in 1999, to eliminate large-scale, "by right" residential development, on lots as small as 1/2 acre, in the agricultural zone. The county has also worked with Blacksburg, Christiansburg, and Radford to shape

growth areas around the municipalities to be served by existing roads and utilities, and achieve efficiencies in services like law enforcement and trash collection.

The county and the municipalities promote the orderly inclusion of the development areas into the municipalities through utility agreements and mutually acceptable boundary line adjustments. The county also cooperates with each municipality in the review of proposed developments located close to municipal boundaries.

9/10/2008, Coalition for Smarter Growth, Piedmont Environmental Council. This case study does not address the issue of community design within the growth areas.