

Options for Plan Amendments for Changes from Rural to Suburban Area Types

Background

The Rural Area Type makes up 4.4% of the area within the City Limits on the Regional Plan's Future Growth Illustration (See Map for details). Currently, about 20% of the City is zoned for Rural Residential (RR) or Estate Residential (ER), which are the similar Zoning Districts. So the Regional Plan already calls for over 80% of areas that currently have a Rural zoning category (i.e. RR and ER) to convert to Suburban or Urban landscapes if Flagstaff is built out according to the Future Growth Illustration

The remaining 4.4% "Rural" landscape is primarily located in areas at the edge of the City, near County islands, or in areas that are difficult to serve with water and sewer. However, infrastructure improvements on adjacent properties may eventually make those areas more attractive or feasible for Suburban development. For example, the J.W. Powell improvements may make the Rural Area Type on the southeast side of Flagstaff more attractive to be purchased for Suburban neighborhood development at some point in time. So a request to change from Rural to Suburban area type is not imminent but is certainly a possibility that should be considered in setting criteria for major plan amendments.

Options

There are pros and cons to how changes from Rural to Suburban are treated (Summarized below and explained in more detail in Attachment D). Council may select an option for inclusion in the final amendment.

Option A: Treat all changes from Rural to Suburban as minor amendments (original proposal)

In the current Regional Plan, there is a major plan amendment category for "Rural to Suburban greater than 20 acres." In reviewing the categories originally, staff proposed that changes from Rural to Suburban be made a minor amendment. This was proposed because:

- Suburban Neighborhoods in the Regional Plan have a maximum density of 10 dwelling units per acre, unlike the Urban Neighborhood characteristics, which have no maximum density.
- Minor amendments will be accompanied by a precise zoning request and likely a site plan, so conditions of approval can be effectively attached to the zoning request. This would prevent someone from proposing single family homes in their major plan amendment request and then 3 years later proposing a medium density apartment building in their zoning request.
- The requirements for notification of surrounding properties and HOAs is the same for major and minor plan amendments.

One downside of Option A is that minor plan amendments do require fewer public meetings but the application requires more detail and the decision is easier to enforce. Another potential downside is that the public may perceive "minor" amendments as less important. They may therefore fly under the radar for some residents.

Option B: Keep current category.

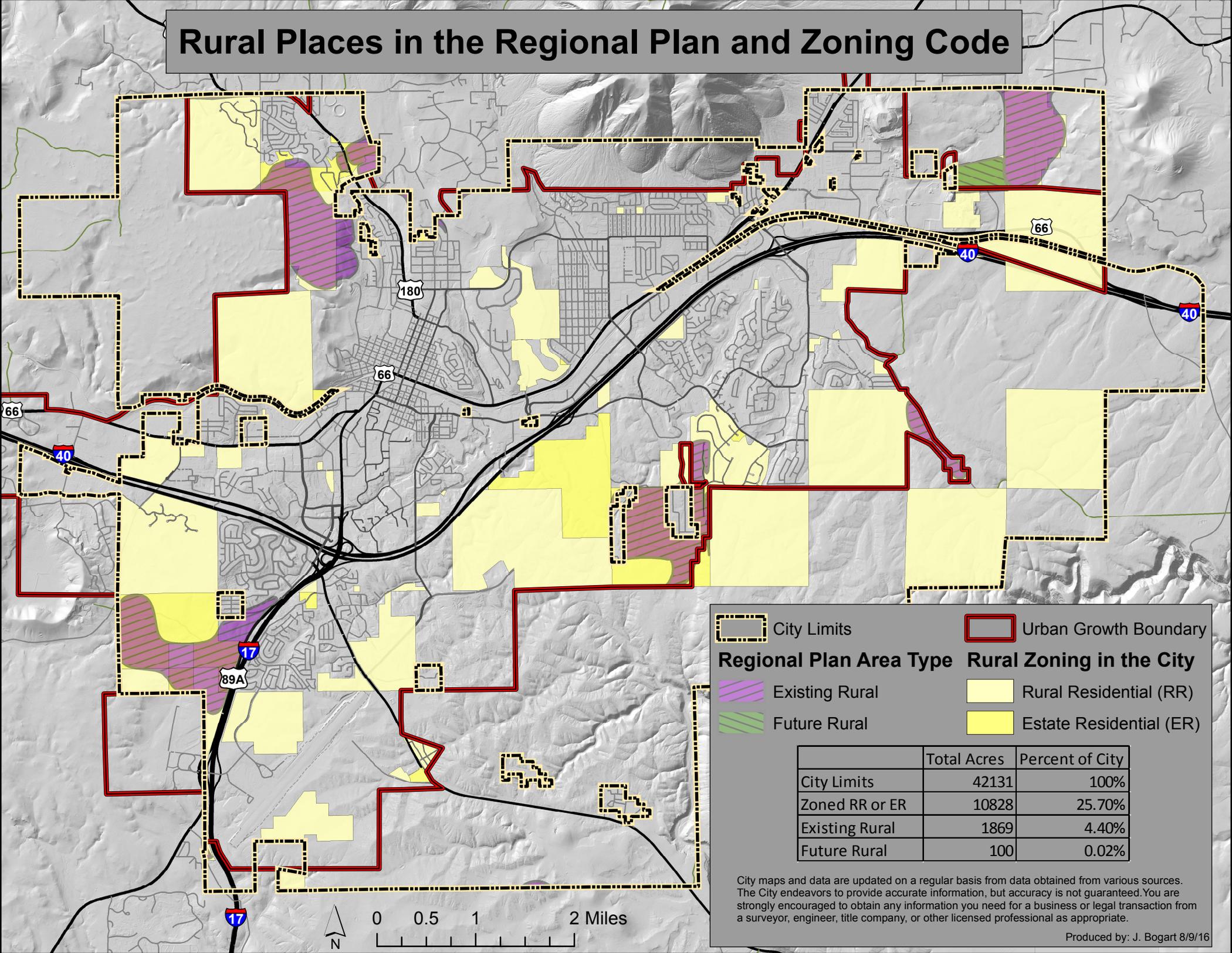
If we were to retain the current category for Rural to Suburban Area Types, it would be the only category with an acre limit. Under Option B, amendments with 19 acres would still be large enough to impact rural character but would not be treated the same as a 20 acres proposal. Option B would create an arbitrary threshold between proposals that staff does not support.

Option C: Require a major amendment for changes from Rural to Suburban Area Types more than ¼ mile from an activity center

Option C would provide the greatest protection for the Rural Area Types. It would guarantee the most public involvement for Rural Areas in the Plan. Option C and would separate the plan amendment and the zoning request, which vests of property rights and allows the City to request conditions of approval that can effectively tie the development to the plan amendment. Option C would increase the amount of time and costs for submitting rezoning applications in these areas because of the additional year needed to process a major plan amendment. Option C could not guarantee that major plan amendment proposals are similar to their zoning requests as described for Option A.

Recommendation: Staff supports either Option A or Option C. Staff does not support Option B because of the arbitrary threshold between proposals that it would create.

Rural Places in the Regional Plan and Zoning Code



 City Limits Urban Growth Boundary
Regional Plan Area Type **Rural Zoning in the City**
 Existing Rural Rural Residential (RR)
 Future Rural Estate Residential (ER)

	Total Acres	Percent of City
City Limits	42131	100%
Zoned RR or ER	10828	25.70%
Existing Rural	1869	4.40%
Future Rural	100	0.02%

City maps and data are updated on a regular basis from data obtained from various sources. The City endeavors to provide accurate information, but accuracy is not guaranteed. You are strongly encouraged to obtain any information you need for a business or legal transaction from a surveyor, engineer, title company, or other licensed professional as appropriate.

