

ARTICLE I – ZONING ORDINANCE  
2025 EDITION

<b>4.1.1</b>	<b>Agricultural-Open Space-Conservation District</b>	<b>AOC</b>
<p><b>Purpose:</b> This district includes portions of the County that are located west of the Shenandoah River and that consist primarily of various open lands such as farms, fields, forests, parks, lakes and flood plains. The district is intended for agricultural, forestal, and low activity recreational and service uses that will facilitate the conservation and preservation of agricultural, forestal and open space lands; the protection of water and clean air sheds; the conservation of water and other natural and ecological resources; the reduction of soil erosion and flood and fire hazards; and the enhancement of the aesthetic value of the district as a whole.</p>		

- A. Lot Density and Dimensional Requirements.** The density and dimensional requirements for existing lots and new lots created through subdivision shall be as set forth in the tables below.

**TABLE 4.1.1[1], Lot Requirements**

<b>LOT AREA REQUIREMENTS -- EXISTING LOTS</b>	
-- Minimum area	2 acres
-- Minimum area, Lot subdivided from lot(s) existing on March 20, 2001 containing less than 4 Acres	1 acre
-- Maximum area	None
-- Minimum lot width	150 feet
-- Maximum lot coverage	None
<b>LOT AREA REQUIREMENTS – NEW LOTS CREATED THROUGH SUBDIVISION</b>	
-- Minimum area	2 acres
-- Minimum area, new lot subdivided from lot(s) existing on March 20, 2001 containing less than 4 Acres	1 acre
-- Maximum area	4 acres
-- Maximum average area of new lots created through subdivision	3 acres
-- Minimum/maximum area with maximum lot size exception	None
-- Minimum lot width	150 feet
-- Maximum lot coverage	None
<b>SPECIAL LOT REQUIREMENTS – BOUNDARY LINE ADJUSTMENTS</b> <a href="#">(See Article II Subdivision Ordinance, Section 4.2.2)</a>	
-- Minimum area, agricultural lot	20 acres
-- Maximum area, residential lot	Less than 20 acres
<b>SPECIAL LOT AREA REQUIREMENTS – EXEMPTION FROM CERTAIN WELL AND SEWAGE DISPOSAL SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS</b> <a href="#">(See Article II Subdivision Ordinance, Section 4.5.6)</a>	
-- Minimum lot area to be exempt from requirements	40 acres

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1. **Maximum Average Area.** For all major and minor subdivisions, a maximum average area shall be calculated from the area of the new proposed lots. The calculation of the maximum average area shall not include:
    - a. Lots proposed with a maximum lot size exception
    - b. Any residual lot remaining from a subdivision of lots that exceeds the maximum lot area.
  
  2. **Administrative Land Divisions.** Any division of a lot into two or more lots with each being a minimum of 100 acres shall not be considered a major or minor subdivision and shall be acted upon administratively by the Zoning Administrator pursuant to [Section 3.3.1 \(Administrative Land Division Review Process\) of Article II \(Subdivision Ordinance\)](#).
  
  3. **AOC-zoned lots 4 acres or less in size.** No residential lot of 4 acres in size or less and zoned Agricultural-Open Space-Conservation (AOC) may be increased in size above 4 acres through boundary line adjustment without approval by the Planning Commission for one or both of the following hardship reasons:
    - To correct a minor encroachment of a driveway, fence, or other structure onto an adjoining lot to a maximum of 10% of the total area of the lot
    - To repair or replace a failing onsite sewage disposal system located on the lot
- B. Building Requirements.** Setback, structure height, and vegetated buffer width requirements shall be as set forth in the tables below:

**TABLE 4.1.1[2], Building Requirements**

<b>BUILDING SETBACK REQUIREMENTS</b>				
<b>Building Setback</b>	<b>Lots less than 1 acre</b>	<b>Lots 1 acre but less than 4 acres</b>	<b>Lots 4 acres but less than 20 acres</b>	<b>Lots 20 acres and greater</b>
<b>Edge of private access easement, private road, or private lane</b>	25 feet	25 feet	50 feet	75 feet
<b>Centerline of secondary highway</b>	50 feet	50 feet	75 feet	100 feet
<b>Centerline of scenic byway</b>	50 feet	100 feet	125 feet	150 feet
<b>Edge of primary highway right of way, less than 5000 trips per day</b>	25 feet	75 feet	100 feet	125 feet
<b>Edge of primary highway right of way, 5000 trips per day or greater</b>	50 feet	75 feet	100 feet	125 feet
<b>All other property lines, structures 200 square feet or less</b>	5 feet	10 feet	50 feet	75 feet
<b>All other property lines, all other structures</b>	10 feet	25 feet	50 feet	75 feet

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<b>Intermittent streams</b>	0 feet	25 feet	50 feet	50 feet
<b>Perennial streams, springs, and sinkholes</b>	100 feet	100 feet	100 feet	100 feet
<b>MAXIMUM STRUCTURE HEIGHT*</b>				
-- Lots with width of less than 75 feet				25 feet
-- All other lots				35 feet
<b>VEGETATED PROPERTY BUFFER WIDTH REQUIREMENTS</b>				
-- Lots less than 20 acres recorded after February 21, 2003				25 feet
-- All other lots				None

\* See [Subsection B2](#) – Maximum height requirements for agricultural structures

1. Vegetated Property Buffer Requirements. A vegetated property buffer containing existing woody vegetation within 25 feet of all property lines shall be retained on all lots of less than 20 acres recorded after February 21, 2003. Specific requirements for vegetated property buffers are set forth in [Section 7.4.1](#).

2. Maximum height requirement for agricultural structures. Agricultural structures shall have a maximum height of 50 feet in height except for silos which shall have a maximum height of 100 feet. In no event shall the height of an agricultural structure exceed the distance from the structure to the nearest lot line.

**C. Special District Regulations.**

1. Maximum lot size exceptions. The maximum lot size requirement in Subsection A may be exceeded when creating new lots via the minor subdivision review process with approval of a maximum lot size exception by the Planning Commission. Application requirements, procedures, and review criteria for maximum lot size exceptions are set forth in [Section 6.2.6 \(Maximum Lot Size Exceptions\)](#).

2. Buffer areas for commercial forestry activities. Required buffer areas for commercial forestry activities shall be as set forth in [Section 7.9, Pre-Harvest Plan Regulations](#).

**D. Uses and Use Regulations.** The list of allowable uses and use regulations for the AOC District is located in [Section 5.2 \(Uses, Definitions and Use Regulations – County Districts\)](#).

**E. Development Regulations.** The following regulations apply to development and uses in the AOC District:

- [Lot and Structure Regulations \(Section 7.1\)](#)
- [Vegetated Property Buffer Requirements – AOC District \(Section 7.4.1\)](#)
- [Outdoor Lighting Requirements \(Section 7.4.3\)](#)
- [Private Driveway Standards \(Section 7.4.4\)](#)
- [Use of Private Wells and Onsite Sewage Disposal Systems; Use of Public Water and Public Sewer \(Section 7.4.5\)](#)

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- [Sign Regulations \(Section 7.8\)](#)
- [Siting of Propane Tanks \(Section 7.10\)](#)
- [Use of Private Access Easements \(Section 7.11\)](#)
- [Parking and Storage of Inoperable Vehicles \(Section 7.12\)](#)