

GROWTH MANAGEMENT

INTRODUCTION

Communities and their rural environs evolve over time and are affected by the actions of local landowners, the plans of planners, programs of environmentalists and the plans of developers. The landscape of Shenandoah County twenty years from now will be the result of the collective group of interested residents, the elected representatives, and outside factors which influence the County.

The following Vision Statement describes in a broad sense what we as a county want to be twenty years from now. It is based on a consensus of popular aspirations and a realistic projection of current socio-economic trends. The Vision Statement provides the framework for formulating a meaningful set of goals and policies for Shenandoah County over the next 20 years.

In the year 2025, Shenandoah County will be a primarily rural community that

- protects its natural resources;
- directs its growth to the towns ensuring its open, agricultural character;
- provides a variety of jobs in business, light industry, tourism and sustainable agriculture;
- maintains moderate growth of a demographically varied population;
- supports safe and efficient interstate transportation and maintains the rural character of its primary and secondary roads;
- affords its students an excellent and appropriate education;
- serves its citizens with public facilities and services that enhance their quality of life;
- and ensures preservation of its natural beauty and unique, historic character by strictly adhering to the goals and objectives of its Comprehensive Plan.

PLANNING POLICIES

A policy is a written statement intended to guide decisions and activities. Policy statements are expressed at different levels of detail: 1) general overall goals, 2) objectives or principles that further define those goals within various categories, and 3) strategies which set forth specific activities for implementation.

A goal is a broad statement of a future ideal considered desirable for the County. It is a clear and concise statement of the vision of the future of Shenandoah County.

Objectives or principles describe ideas or concepts which can be used to accomplish a goal. They are more specific in terms of the types of activities needed to achieve a particular category of goals (e.g. environmental objectives, economic principles).

Strategies are specific activities to be accomplished which will implement the goals and objectives of the plan. They are based on the facts and evidence generated throughout the planning process and used in establishing the principles or objectives.

The comprehensive planning process is dynamic. As new data are generated and trends are established, changes need to be made to the plan. While the strategies may change often (as they are accomplished or conditions change), the principles or objectives will change less often, and the general goals will not change until they have been met.

The adopted goals and objectives for Shenandoah County follow. A Generalized Future Land Use map appears at the end of this section as Figure 9-A. Section 10 of the plan focuses on implementation recommendations for the period of 2005 to 2010.

GENERAL DEVELOPMENT GOALS

The following goals are broad policies that the Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors will apply in making decisions affecting the County's growth through the year 2025. The specific objectives and strategies were drawn from the general goals, and from the information contained in Sections 1 through 8 of this plan:

- GOAL 1 - Preserve and enhance the natural environment of the County.
- GOAL 2 - Protect and promote the historic resources of the County.
- GOAL 3 - Guide and direct growth into and around the towns and other areas served by public utilities, while preserving the rural and open space character of the balance of the County.
- GOAL 4 - Create a business climate conducive to economic activity and encourage a diversity of business & industrial activity.
- GOAL 5 - Promote affordable housing for all segments of the population.
- GOAL 6 - Provide for the improvement of public facilities and for the delivery of necessary public services.
- GOAL 7 - Provide a safe and efficient transportation system throughout the County.
- GOAL 8 - Provide for a continuing planning process which results in policies to manage the County's growth and development.

GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES
FOR INDIVIDUAL PLAN CATEGORIES

1. NATURAL RESOURCES

GOAL - Preserve and enhance the natural environment of the County.

OBJECTIVE A - Protect the natural environment from damage due to development activity.

STRATEGY 1) - Protect the natural resources and respect development limitations of slope, soils, geology, and water resources.

STRATEGY 2) - Expand acreage in agricultural and forestal districts for their contributions to the economic base and environmental quality.

OBJECTIVE B - Provide for development according to the carrying capacity of the environment.

STRATEGY 1) - Through the use of overlay zones, limit development in areas identified as having high potential for groundwater pollution; protect sinkholes.

STRATEGY 2) - Through the use of overlay zones, limit density in areas which are identified as critical areas for septic systems.

OBJECTIVE C - Preserve and adopt specific measures to protect the Shenandoah River, other streams, and the County's ground water.

STRATEGY 1) - Regulate development in flood plains and promote landowners' participation in hazard mitigation programs that will reduce future dangers of flooding.

STRATEGY 2) - Develop/implement a groundwater protection plan for the County.

STRATEGY 3) - Identify priority watersheds; identify and adopt specific measures to protect sinkholes, streams and wetland areas.

STRATEGY 4) - Assist towns and other public water suppliers in protecting public water supplies, including wellheads and aquifer recharge areas.

OBJECTIVE D - Require industrial compliance with environmental standards.

STRATEGY 1) - Support State agency implementation of environmental standards.

STRATEGY 2) - Provide for review of industrial proposals by State environmental agencies.

STRATEGY 3) - Include performance requirements in zoning and site plan regulations for industry.

2. REGIONAL SETTING & HISTORY

GOAL - Protect and promote the historic resources in Shenandoah County.

OBJECTIVE A - Preserve individual properties and sites throughout the county.

STRATEGY 1) - Complete additional surveys and nomination of eligible properties and rural historic districts to the Virginia and National registers. In addition to many individual historic homes and buildings, Shenandoah County contains several unincorporated villages that may be eligible for historic designation.

STRATEGY 2) - Require all development proposals to identify historic and prehistoric features. Require development proposals to include specific plans for all historic and prehistoric features within the development area.

STRATEGY 3) - Publicize historic features of Shenandoah County and tax incentives and other preservation programs available to assist property owners with preservation initiatives. Encourage private preservation of historic resources.

STRATEGY 4) - Provide resource information to assist private citizens and developers in the following preservation activities:

- identification of historic buildings and features
- nomination of properties for inclusion in historic registers
- application for tax credits for historic restoration and tax deductions for donated easements.
- identification of funding opportunities and application for grants associated with historic preservation.

OBJECTIVE B - Protect and enhance battlefield sites throughout the County.

STRATEGY 1) - Support the implementation of Shenandoah Valley Civil War Battlefields National Historic District preservation plans in the County:

- continue to show rural areas of the battlefields as agricultural or forest uses.
- limit the extension of water and sewer service into these areas.
- prevent road construction or improvements to existing roads that would cause adverse impact with particular attention to Battlefield Rd. at Fisher's Hill.
- refrain from approving infrastructure or capital projects such as solid waste disposal facilities, schools or communications towers.

STRATEGY 2) Consider conveying conservation easements on county-owned land at Fisher's Hill and Tom's Brook Battlefields to the Virginia Outdoors Foundation.

STRATEGY 3) Explore implementation methods that the County can commit toward battlefield preservation such as PDR, agricultural and forestal districts, agricultural support programs and a battlefield preservation zoning district.

STRATEGY 4) Encourage the use of donated easements and other voluntary measures to permanently protect Civil War sites.

3. LAND USE

GOAL - Guide and direct growth into and around the towns and public service areas, while preserving the rural and open space character of the balance of the County.

OBJECTIVE A - Guide major development to locate in and around the towns and utility service areas.

STRATEGY 1) - Coordinate County zoning in adjacent areas around towns with zoning in the towns so as to ensure compatible zoning.

STRATEGY 2) - Identify potential public service areas and seek annexation agreements or urban growth area plans with towns to define those areas.

STRATEGY 3) - Encourage uniform town subdivision regulations.

STRATEGY 4) - Create incentives for development where public services are available.

OBJECTIVE B - Maintain the rural and open space character of areas outside of the public service areas.

STRATEGY 1) - Confine urban forms of land development to the public service areas.

STRATEGY 2) - Maintain a low average density of dwelling units in agricultural and conservation areas by establishing a maximum number of dwelling units per 100 acres or fraction thereof.

STRATEGY 3) - Adapt the cluster housing concept for subdivisions and set the open space requirement to 70%.

STRATEGY 4) - Encourage rural property owners to place their land in agricultural or forestal districts.

STRATEGY 5) - Encourage the use of conservation, scenic, historic and other voluntary easements to permanently preserve land.

STRATEGY 6) - Consider the purchase of development rights of strategically located high quality rural property.

OBJECTIVE C - Guide future commercial land uses to locate where there is access to major transportation corridors and where public utility services are available.

STRATEGY 1) - Consider locations carefully when evaluating rezoning requests.

STRATEGY 2) - Provide for adequate access and for avoiding congestion along roadways.

STRATEGY 3) - Coordinate placement of utilities with developers and the towns/service authorities.

STRATEGY 4) - Establish adequate buffer zones between residential and commercial and industrial areas to maintain property values and physical attractiveness.

OBJECTIVE D - Guide future industrial land uses to locate near the interstate corridor and interchanges where public utility services are available and adequate transportation facilities exist:

STRATEGY 1) - Promote new industry to locate in the existing industrial parks whenever feasible.

STRATEGY 2) - Provide for adequate access and for avoiding congestion along roadways, accommodating safe and efficient movement of people and goods.

STRATEGY 3) - Coordinate placement of utilities with developers and the towns/service authorities.

STRATEGY 4) - Along I-81, locate businesses that need maximum access by the public at the interchanges. Retain open spaces along the interstate between the interchanges and other frontages to preserve the natural beauty of the Valley and to preserve historic areas.

STRATEGY 5) - Encourage light non-polluting industry and business that will benefit the economy and ecology of the County.

STRATEGY 6) - Promote industrial uses in "park" settings with adequate distance and aesthetic qualities in relation to neighboring uses and roadways.

STRATEGY 7) - Ensure there is adequate ground or surface water to support any new industry.

4. ECONOMY

GOAL - Create a business climate conducive to economic activity and encourage a diversity of business and industry in the County.

OBJECTIVE A - Encourage the development of existing and new commercial and industrial activities.

STRATEGY 1) - Continue the activities that were required for the Virginia Certification Program; establish and maintain an adequate database of information to support economic development activities.

STRATEGY 2) - Encourage light, non-polluting industries and businesses that will benefit the economy and ecology of the County.

STRATEGY 3) - Emphasize the recruitment of higher wage companies; those that require a better educated work force, a more highly-skilled work force, a more technically-oriented work force, and a more knowledge-based work force.

OBJECTIVE B - Support travel and tourist related activities.

STRATEGY 1) - Promote tourism and destination marketing.

STRATEGY 2) - Encourage the protection of scenic beauty and historic sites.

STRATEGY 3) - Enhance recreational facilities.

STRATEGY 4) - Support the implementation of the Shenandoah Valley Battlefields National Historic District, the interpretation of Civil War sites and related tourism and travel activities.

OBJECTIVE C - Maintain and promote the role of agriculture as part of the basic economy of the County:

STRATEGY 1) - Provide the means to preserve agricultural land through such measures as Agricultural & Forestal Districts, conservation easements, purchase of development rights, zoning laws and tax incentives.

STRATEGY 2) - Promote the health and growth of agriculture as an industry.

STRATEGY 3) - Encourage diversity in agricultural production.

STRATEGY 4) - Encourage better marketing of agricultural products.

STRATEGY 5) - Provide agricultural educational opportunities for our youth.

5. HOUSING

GOAL 5 - Promote affordable housing for all segments of the population.

OBJECTIVE A - Provide for a variety of housing types and locations.

STRATEGY 1) - Promote equal housing opportunity for all.

STRATEGY 2) - Encourage the creation of quality housing through land use ordinances and building codes.

OBJECTIVE B - Reduce the cost of housing.

STRATEGY 1) - Provide for a range of housing types and styles consistent with a town/rural environment and local incomes.

STRATEGY 2) - Encourage maintenance of the existing housing stock with rehabilitation and historic preservation activities as appropriate.

OBJECTIVE C - Encourage energy efficient housing types and patterns.

STRATEGY 1) - Guide residential development to locate in proximity to good transportation access; near the major retail shopping areas and major employment centers; and in areas with public services such as water and sewer, fire, and police protection.

6. PUBLIC FACILITIES

GOAL - Provide for the improvement of public facilities and for the delivery of necessary public services.

OBJECTIVE A - Provide adequate services and facilities to serve planned land uses and development.

STRATEGY 1) - Delineate service areas around towns and phase development within those service areas consistent with the availability of services.

STRATEGY 2) - Infrastructure that is required for developments requires financial participation by the developers.

STRATEGY 3) - Improve the County's school facilities to meet valid needs, including rapidly expanding enrollment.

OBJECTIVE B - Contribute to the needs of the community with parks and recreation facilities for citizens of all ages.

STRATEGY 1) - Continue to develop the County's regional and town parks.

STRATEGY 2) - Insure that all appropriate recreational facilities are provided.

STRATEGY 3) - Provide recreational programs and activities.

STRATEGY 4) - Provide a County-sponsored facility for the performing arts.

OBJECTIVE C - Improve the capability for fire and rescue service dispatching and response.

STRATEGY 1) - Continue to develop a parcel-based geographic information system (GIS) for the County and tie the computer mapping into emergency dispatching operations.

OBJECTIVE D - Comply with state and federal requirements for the disposal of solid waste:

STRATEGY 1) - Promote recycling and waste-minimization efforts through public education; develop and implement a county-wide recycling program.

STRATEGY 2) - Continue to promote regional cooperation on solid waste disposal issues.

STRATEGY 3) - Continue to participate in regional solid waste planning and encourage towns to do the same.

OBJECTIVE E - As part of the annual budget process implement capital projects through Capital Improvements Programs (CIPs):

STRATEGY 1) - Conduct a fiscal analysis of trends in County revenues and expenditures to determine relative fiscal capacity for expanded services and capital projects.

STRATEGY 2) - Maintain a County CIP as part of the budget process.

STRATEGY 3) - Encourage all towns and other county service agencies to have capital improvement programs.

7. TRANSPORTATION

GOAL - Provide a safe and efficient transportation system throughout the County.

OBJECTIVE A - Integrate transportation planning with land use planning.

STRATEGY 1) - Coordinate land use planning and decisions with transportation planning.

STRATEGY 2) - Require that adequate access roadways are provided for before rezoning or subdivisions are approved.

STRATEGY 3) - Coordinate transportation planning with the approved Old Valley Pike Corridor Plan.

OBJECTIVE B - Improve the secondary road system in the County while maintaining the rural character of the County:

STRATEGY 1) - Widen rights-of-way and roadways only where necessary for safety.

STRATEGY 2) - Improve existing roadway surfaces with pave-in-place.

STRATEGY 3) - Develop better drainage along roads where flooding occurs.

STRATEGY 4) - Require subdivision roads in public service areas to meet urban standards.

OBJECTIVE C - Encourage VDOT to improve access to I-81 and the primary highway system.

STRATEGY 1) - Reduce congestion and increase capacity at interstate interchanges through reconstruction and transportation system management measures.

STRATEGY 2) - Prevent capacity from deteriorating as additional commercial development proceeds; provide for a rigorous review of proposed projects and determination of traffic measures needed.

STRATEGY 3) - Require traffic impact analyses for larger developments.

STRATEGY 4) - Support improvements to the Interstate highway system in Shenandoah County but insure that they are done with adequate design to preserve the County's scenic, natural, historic and rural areas.

OBJECTIVE D - Encourage the provision of a full range of transportation options.

STRATEGY 1) - Support exploration of a rail solution to Interstate congestion.

STRATEGY 2) - Provide for adequate and safe pedestrian and bicycle travel.

STRATEGY 3) - Encourage public transportation initiatives by the private sector.

STRATEGY 4) - Support regional airport service.

8. GROWTH MANAGEMENT POLICIES

GOAL - Provide for a continuous planning process which results in policies to manage the County's growth and development.

OBJECTIVE A - Maintain the Comprehensive Plan process to implement the Generalized Future Land Use map which presents a composite of recommended plan amendments:

STRATEGY 1) - Conduct a plan review annually.

STRATEGY 2) - Prepare updates to individual sections, if required, on a more frequent basis.

STRATEGY 3) - Conduct special planning studies as conditions warrant.

STRATEGY 4) - Review and update the Implementation section annually as part of the plan review process.

OBJECTIVE B - Provide for adequate personnel and financial resources to manage future growth.

STRATEGY 1) - Provide staffing as required to assure effective plan analysis and implementation.

OBJECTIVE C - Provide a mechanism for continuity between the Comprehensive Plan and the actions of the Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors.

STRATEGY 1) - Indicate for each action whether or not it conforms with the Comprehensive Plan.