

A NORTH STAR FOR
ELECTED OFFICIALS

2014


SHENANDOAH
COUNTY

A FUTURE TOGETHER
LAYING THE FOUNDATION FOR A NEW BEGINNING

YOUR ROLE IN OUR
COUNTY'S FUTURE

QUICK REFERENCE

This handbook provides everything you need to succeed as an elected or appointed official in Shenandoah County. After hearing from over 2,500 people and engaging thousands more we as a community have a Plan for action to make our future a reality. Here's what you'll find:

General Layout and Vision of the Plan (pgs 2–3):

Understand why this handbook helps you and the Plan's vision statement.

Who Uses the Plan (pgs 4–5):

Discover the role elected and appointed officials play in implementation.

Land Use Checklist (pgs 6–7):

A decision-making checklist to help evaluate land use requests.

Funding Studies & Projects (pgs 8–9):

A list of the strategies for studies and projects in the Plan.

Code Updates (pgs 10–11):

A list of the code updates in the Plan with information on their importance.

Policies and Supporting Staff and Committees (pgs 12–13):

Info on policies and advice on collaboration with staff and committees.

Public Engagement & General Layout of the Plan (pgs 14–15):

Overview on the engagement that made this plan and the overall framework.

Tools to Use the Plan (pgs 16–17):

Access the resources needed to utilize the plan effectively.

History of the County (pgs 18–19):

Learn about Shenandoah County's historical foundation.

Towns, Villages, and Hamlets (pgs 20–21):

Information on what and where these places are and their planned futures.

Six Big Ideas (pgs 22–23):

An outline of the county's six foundational concepts.

The 11 Chapters & the Future (pgs 24–25):

An overview of the 11 chapters and the five year implementation periods.

Key Terms and Contacts (pgs 26–27):

A glossary of important terms and a directory of key contacts.

THIS PLAN IS OUR NORTH STAR

The Shenandoah 2045 Comprehensive Plan is our community's north star, guiding us to the future.

Our Vision for 2045 is to strictly adhere to the goals and objectives of the Comprehensive Plan in order to maintain the rural aspects and the character of Shenandoah County so it continues to be –

1. A responsible steward conserving, preserving, and protecting our environmental, recreational, historic, cultural, and scenic resources for residents and visitors; and
2. A unique place to live with responsible policies, public services, and quality education that enhance the quality of life and promotes appropriate growth within and limits growth outside our towns, villages, and hamlets so that agricultural areas and other open green spaces remain a predominant feature of the landscape; and
3. A great place to work encouraging entrepreneurship, innovative and appropriate businesses and industries with a versatile trained workforce and varied jobs that pay a competitive wage; and
4. A collaborative community that continues to work with private and public entities to ensure Shenandoah County is healthy and vibrant.

Our Greatest Challenges Over The Next 20 Years:

1. Accountability.
2. Stopping suburban sprawl to protect the view and access to the natural beauty that attracts people here.
3. Protecting our water resources while promoting growth.
4. Providing accessible quality public education and community resources built for the 22nd Century while the population lives in a low-density setting.
5. Growing a local economy along with similar outside businesses in a market with neighboring growth centers.
6. Promoting and protecting farming as an occupation while encouraging tourism-based farming.
7. Providing a transportation system built for the 22nd Century.
8. Addressing the decline of participation in civic and community organizations and services.
9. Providing a County that is healthy, affordable, and livable for people of all backgrounds, ages, and incomes.
10. Promoting community-based redevelopment while preventing gentrification.

WHO WILL USE THE PLAN?

In order for the Plan to be a success, we need to build A Future Together with a variety of stakeholders that helped to create and inform the plan.



DEPARTMENTS & AGENCIES

Department and agency leaders should know the plan well, aligning their strategies and actions with its recommendations. Their involvement in systematic planning and area-specific initiatives is crucial for the plan's implementation.



DEVELOPERS & INVESTORS

Developers and investors should refer to the plan for land use, connectivity, and development guidance. It offers insights on preferred development forms and community-building, crucial for growth that aligns with our character and rural heritage.



CONSERVATION ORGANIZATIONS

Conservation groups are crucial for the plan's environmental goals, especially in strategies involving our precious water and land resources. The plan helps guide where their work is needed and provides recommended actions to support their ongoing work in the community.



COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS

Community organizations should actively engage in strategies and advocate for the plan's recommendations. Their involvement is crucial in implementing actions as part of community-led initiatives which helps to ensure community-driven progress.



THE PUBLIC

Residents of Shenandoah County are essential to the success of Shenandoah 2045. Staying informed and involved, assisting in strategy implementation, and providing feedback ensures the plan remains relevant and meets the community's evolving needs.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES OF ELECTED OFFICIALS

Your Role as a Steward of the Plan:

As an elected official, you hold a unique position of influence and responsibility. You are entrusted with guiding our county toward a prosperous future while preserving the values and heritage that make our community unique. Elected leaders are key to upholding the plan by committing to its goals and objectives. Here's how you can take action to ensure the comprehensive plan is realized:

Land Use Decisions:

When deciding on rezonings or special use permits, align decisions with the Future Land Use Map and the community's desire to preserve agricultural land while promoting investment in Towns, Villages, and Hamlets. Ask how the proposal addresses existing services, water resources, and quality of life.

Fund Studies & Projects:

Support funding for essential studies related to water, infrastructure, and capacity to guide responsible investment. Ensure these studies are integrated into the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) and Service Improvement Plan (SIP) for long-term prosperity and community protection.

Approve Code Updates:

Approve code updates that encourage the best use of land from a walkable, small-town feel to protecting the rural landscape. Prioritize updates that remove barriers to investments in desired locations while ensuring rural resources are preserved for future generations to enjoy.

Policy & Supporting Staff & Committees:

Enact policies and work with staff and committees to ensure they have the resources and guidance needed to implement the plan effectively. Collaborate to maintain a focus on enhancing services while safeguarding open lands.

Your Next Steps:

1. Use this handbook to familiarize yourself with the Plan.
2. Let your constituents know about the future and engage them.
3. Work with other officials and staff to implement the Plan.

MAKING LAND USE DECISIONS

When Special Use Permits, Rezoning, and removals from Agricultural and Forestal Districts go to public hearing there are measures that should be checked in determining if the request should be approved or denied. The following is a review decision table:

#	Question	Yes	No
1	Is the request in line with the Future Land Use Map (FLUM)?	Proceed	Consider Denial
2	Is the use aligned with the comprehensive plan?	Or can advance goals or solve a problem, or not addressed -Proceed	Consider Denial
3	Does the proposal conflict with surrounding uses?	Applicant engaged neighbors & addressed concerns? -Proceed	Proceed.
4	Mitigation plan for impact on water resources?	Or not impacted. -Proceed	Consider Denial
5	Is the soil productive farmland?	Consider denial unless aligned with FLUM.	Proceed.
6	Proposal connection to resources & infrastructure?	Aligned with Towns, Villages - Proceed	Consider Denial
7	Positive impact on jobs, services, quality of life?	Proceed	Consider Denial
8	Adequate infrastructure & public services?	Or proposal offsets public costs -Proceed	Consider Denial
9	Does the proposal address past community issues?	Proceed	Consider Denial
10	Preserves/enhances historical, scenic, cultural resources?	Or not impacted. -Proceed	Consider Denial
11	Contributes to housing goals (affordable, diverse)?	Or not applicable. -Proceed	Consider Denial
12	Improves access to education, healthcare, emergency services?	Or not applicable. -Proceed	Consider Denial
13	Aligned with transportation/recreation goals?	Proceed to Final Evaluation	Consider Denial
14	Aligned with most questions?	Consider approval.	Consider Denial

Land Use Decision Checklist Based on the 11 Chapters

1. Historical, Cultural, & Scenic Resources
 - Does the proposal impact historic landmarks or scenic areas?
 - Does it preserve or enhance these resources?
 - Does it support adaptive reuse of historic structures?
2. Water Resources
 - Will the proposal affect water resources (rivers, streams, floodplains)?
 - Are there measures to protect water quality or manage stormwater?
3. Agricultural, Forestal, & Geological Resources
 - Is the land better suited for agriculture or forestry?
 - Does it avoid areas with important geological features (sinkholes, slopes)?
4. Economic Development
 - How does the proposal contribute to local economic growth or job creation?
 - Does it provide needed services or help fill economic gaps?
5. Housing
 - Does the project support affordable or diverse housing (not just single family)?
 - Is it located in an area designated for residential growth in the FLUM?
6. Community Services & Facilities
 - Will the proposal increase demand on public services?
 - Is there sufficient public infrastructure to support the development?
 - If not, does the project offset costs for new infrastructure?
7. Education
 - Will the project impact public schools in terms of enrollment or resources?
 - Does it provide opportunities for educational partnerships (ie training)?
8. Health
 - Does the proposal improve access to healthcare services?
 - Will it enhance public health (e.g., through walkability & recreational facilities)?
9. Emergency Services, Infrastructure, & Technology
 - Will the project enhance infrastructure or technology (broadband, EMS)?
 - Does it ensure emergency access and improve community safety?
10. Recreation
 - Does the proposal create or improve access to recreational resources?
 - Does it help protect natural resources for recreational use?
11. Transportation
 - Does the project support diverse transportation (paths, bike lanes, car share)?
 - Will it promote walkability or use of public transportation?
 - Will it increase traffic, and if so, are there mitigation plans?

FUNDING STUDIES & PROJECTS

Our plan calls for two additional plans including a 30 year Long Range CIP (LRCIP) and a Service Improvement Plan (SIP). The plan both calls for items to be considered for the CIP, LRCIP, and SIP as well as policy standards to enhance their effectiveness. Policy standards are seen below while individual items are to the right. As an elected official it is vital items are listed in improvement plans for fiscal planning.

Capital Improvement Plan (CIP): Our present guide to physical investments we need to make, identify when to make them, and be prepared for them. The CIP can include items that are funded or unfunded and are vital in addressing the impact development poses to public services and infrastructure.

Long Range CIP (LRCIP): Our long term guide, updated every 5 years, spanning 30 years for improvements that we expect to be completely renovated, replaced, or developed for new capacity such as new schools or office space so when we reach the capacity trigger to fund the improvement we will be financially prepared.

Service Improvement Plan (SIP): Our short and long term guide, updated every other year, to address service changes, including personnel and training, similar to how physical assets are addressed so when new personnel or services are needed are are prepared to make that investment including office resources and training.

Shenandoah Towns And County Committee (STACC): A proposed joint committee with representatives from the Towns, County Administration, County Social Services, SCPS, Sanitary District Office, and Community Development departments to draft and review the LRCIP, CIP, and SIP. (#6.2.1.1)

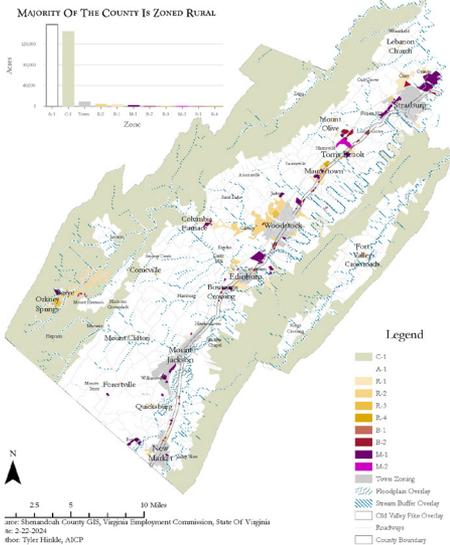
Timeframe / Priority	#	Strategy	Lead Stakeholders
2025-2030 S&R	6.2.1	The CIP will be updated every 2 years.	CA, SCPS
	6.2.2	Long range items that exceed the five year framework will go into a 30 year Long Range CIP (LRCIP).	CA, SCPS
	6.2.3	Develop a SIP, written jointly by the Towns and County Social Services and Human Resources departments.	HR, SS
2030-2035 U&E	6.2.8	The Facility and Equipment Inventory and Quality Study will be updated every 2 years opposite that of the CIP.	CA, GP

Timeframe / Priority	#	Strategy	Lead Stakeholders
2025-2030 S&R	2.4.1	Add identified studies to the CIP and conduct them so we better understand our water resources.	CD, VDH
	3.3.1	Conduct studies to identify all geological resources in the County.	CD, GIS
	5.2.3	Study and better understand the impact vacant building owners and rental users such as short term rentals hold on affordability and availability.	CD, TED
	6.1.1	Consider a Public Affairs Department.	BOS, CA
	6.1.2	Bring Shenandoah County systems into the 21st century and online permitting and payment.	BOS, CA
	6.2.4	Utilize fiscal, capital, and service impact models.	CD, HR
	6.2.5	Increase capacity for grants.	BOS, CA
	6.5.1	Improve library services.	CL, BOS
	7.1.2	In conjunction with facilities studies, acquire funding and resources to expand space.	SCPS, BOS
	11.3.3	Conduct studies and improve safety along streets so they function more as streets and less as roads.	CD, All Towns
2030-2035 U&E	1.1.3	Achieve and maintain CLG status with DHR.	CD, CL
	4.1.6	A database of employment, training, and mentorship opportunities developed/maintained.	TED, BOS
	4.5.4	Consider an Event Coordinator to coordinate the all events, dates, and create a database.	BOS, TED
	5.1.8	Consider a Housing Authority with the six towns.	BOS, CD
	9.1.5	Consider a Chief Information Officer position, serving as the enterprise architect.	BOS, CA
	11.1.7	Study and improve Pouts Hill Road and install an accessible entrance to Keister Park.	CD, NSVRC
	11.5.4	Study the benefits and consequences of shared transportation services other than ShenGO.	CD, NSVRC
2035-2040 I&E	2.1.9	Increase staffing to address alternative systems.	BOS, VDH
	3.2.6	Evaluate the benefits of establishing a County Forest program.	BOS, VCE
	5.1.9	Consider a Housing Department	BOS, CA
	7.3.9	Dedicated space for moderate auditoriums seating 300 to 1,000 individuals at every high school.	SCPS, BOS
	8.1.10	Consider a Poverty Reduction Manager, to reduce poverty via private market and existing services.	BOS, SS
2040-2045 R&R	7.3.10	Dedicated space for minor auditoriums seating 50 to 300 individuals will be available at every school.	SCPS, BOS
	9.2.12	Study healthy competition for improved internet.	IT, EOC

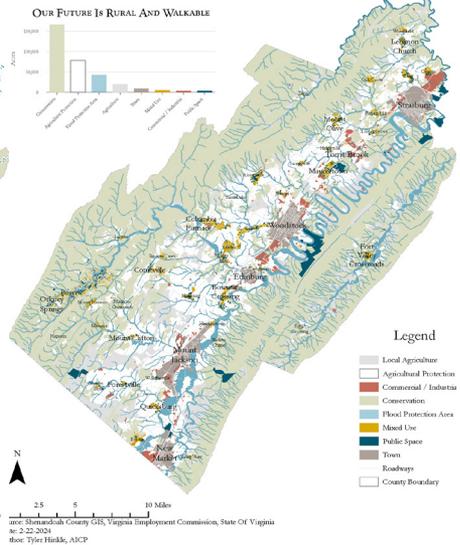
APPROVING CODE UPDATES

Our community thrives when our codes and regulations are up-to-date and reflective of current needs. Our zoning ordinance was adopted in 1978 and has been updated incrementally since then but has never seen a comprehensive update. Below is a comparison of our current zoning and future land use maps as well as code updates recommended in the plan to bring our code and maps more in line.

**CURRENT ZONING
OF SHENANDOAH COUNTY**



**FUTURE LAND USE MAP
OF SHENANDOAH COUNTY**



Timeframe / Priority	#	Strategy	Lead Stakeholders
2025-2030 S&R	1.2.1	Areas that allow for view from vehicles or for pedestrians will be actively sought and coordinated with VDOT, Towns, zoning, and other organizations to allow for safe viewing areas.	CD, PC
	1.2.2	Battlefield Core Areas, Ridgelines, Altitudes, Critical Slopes, Scenic By-ways, key viewsheds, and gateways to Towns, Villages, and Hamlets can be protected with zoning, easements, and other tools.	CD, PC
	1.3.1	Amend County zoning regulations and work with Towns to amend Town zoning regulations to support adaptive reuse then identify and market historic structures suitable for adaptive reuse.	CD
	2.2.2	Flood control dams in the County will be properly maintained and damage from them will be mitigated with an Overlay zoning ordinance.	CD, EOC

2025-2030 S&R	3.3.2	Consider a mining and extraction resource zoning district to accommodate the expansion of existing quarries and limit additional quarries.	CD, PC
	3.4.2	Enhance local zoning to protect wildlife habitats.	CD, PC
	4.4.2	Amend zoning that is too burdensome or unequal to similar businesses/industries in the same or similar zoning.	CD, TED
	4.5.2	Adopt form-based codes for the villages and hamlets and share ideas with Towns to allow a variety of uses while still regulating appearance.	CD
	5.2.1	Zoning should be updated to promote a mixture of housing types.	CD, PC
	5.3.1	Support Town and Village expansion of existing multiuse zoning districts to increase the number of apartments or housing units above storefronts.	CD, TED
	5.3.3	Support upzoning of existing residential lands for a base of 30 dwelling units per acre or more for density needed to support public transportation.	CD, PC
	9.1.4	Consider Shenandoah as a key and 4IR technology-friendly zone.	CD, PC
	9.3.1	The County will update its zoning and building standards to ensure all new structures and renovations of existing structures ensures that they are safe for efficient fire and rescue service while ensuring walkable and historic development.	CD, PC
	11.2.1	Update zoning and subdivision requirements to require sidewalks, shared use paths, bike lanes, and shared streets to be installed or for right of way to be dedicated at key times.	CD, All Towns
	11.3.1	Review existing County and Town standards on subdivision and zoning requirements and how they impact street layouts and connectivity.	All Towns, CD, VDOT
2030-2035 U&E	1.3.5	Consider local historic zoning districts with guidelines on major alterations or new construction.	CD, PC
	11.4.4	Explore an Airport Overlay Zoning Ordinances to limit the disruption to the approach zones to the Basye and New Market Airports.	CD, PC, All Towns
2035-2040 I&E	1.3.6	Consider a facade grant program for the local historic zoning districts.	CD, TED
2040-2045 R&R	2.3.7	Evaluate viability of a single water and waste authority to be known as the Shenandoah Water and Waste Authority after zoning protections are put in place to prevent suburban sprawl.	SD, CA
2045-2072 P&A	4.3.11	Align zoning and EDA acquisition with FLUM and productive vineyard/ hop/ orchard lands.	PC, TED

POLICY & SUPPORTING STAFF / COMMITTEES

As an elected official, one of your roles is to ensure that both staff and committees have the resources, support, and guidance they need to implement the comprehensive plan. You also lead by setting policy and tax strategies that shape the county's future.

Key Responsibilities:

- **Set Clear Policy:** Adopt policies and resolutions that align with the comprehensive plan—balancing growth and protecting rural areas.
- **Diversify the Tax Base:** Guide tax policies to encourage commercial growth, reducing the tax burden on residents and supporting a sustainable economy.

Collaborating with Staff & Committees

- **Staff:** County departments handle the day-to-day work. Make sure they have the necessary funding, resources, and training to carry out their tasks efficiently.
- **Committees:** Committees bring expertise and public input to key issues. Your role is to support their work and make sure their recommendations align with long-term goals.

Key Committees You Work With:

- **Agricultural & Forestal District Advisory Committee:** Helps protect agricultural lands and manage district policies.
- **Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC):** Reviews and updates the plan.
- **Conservation Easement Authority:** Works to preserve rural and scenic lands and increase public access through easements.
- **Economic Development Authority:** Supports business growth and job creation.
- **Parks & Recreation Advisory Board:** Guides the development of public spaces and recreational opportunities.
- **Planning Commission:** Evaluates land use proposals and ensures they align with the plan.
- **Tourism Council:** Advises on promoting tourism and local economy.
- **Water Resources Advisory Committee (WRAC):** Studies and advises on water resource protection strategies.

Next Steps for You:

1. **Support Staff & Committees:** Ensure both staff and committees have the resources and guidance they need to implement the comprehensive plan.
2. **Set Policy:** Introduce policies, resolutions, and tax strategies that align with Shenandoah 2045's vision.
3. **Promote Economic Growth:** Use tax policy to support balanced commercial growth and reduce the burden on residents while protecting rural areas.

Timeframe / Priority	#	Strategy	Lead Stakeholders
2025-2030 S&R	2.2.1	Consider regulation on spreading biosolids to protect water resources and the health of citizens.	BOS, Landfill
	4.4.6	Fund economic development commensurate with outcome expectations.	BOS, TED
	5.1.2	Support existing surveys and data systems.	BOS, CD
2030-2035 U&E	2.1.6	The concept of removing fracking as a use allowed in Shenandoah County may be evaluated.	BOS, CA
	2.4.2	Consider defining the roles of WRAC.	CD, BOS
	3.1.5	Continue a suite of options including lower tax rates (i.e. Land Use taxation and no machinery tax on farm equipment) on eligible ag lands.	BOS, COR
	10.2.2	Consider support for a regional trail along the Norfolk Southern Rail Line. This does not preclude a rail w/ trail if found viable by Virginia, or other uses.	CD, BOS
	4.4.8	No public employee will be paid lower than the annual competitive wage and private employers will be encouraged to pay a competitive wage.	BOS, CA
	5.1.6	The public will have access to information on the count and location of affordable housing in the County.	BOS, CD
2035-2040 I&E	4.2.6	County leadership will play an active role in supporting the growth and expansion of agribusiness opportunities.	BOS, VCE
	6.5.9	Encourage County residents to construct roadside shelters at which books can be shared for free.	BOS, CL
2040-2045 R&R	10.2.9	Petition Congress for the establishment of Shenandoah National Recreation Area.	CD, P&R
2045-2072 P&A	1.2.5	Support the expansion and improvement of State Parks, National Battlefield Parks, National Recreation Areas, and National Scenic Areas.	BOS, CD
	4.4.12	Implement comprehensive staff support and development programs.	BOS, CA
	11.4.9	Ensure reliable energy supply and promote alternative energy fueling stations.	BOS
	11.5.7	Support the enhancement and expansion of passenger rail service in the region.	BOS, All Towns

A COMMUNITY BUILT PLAN



INFORM
2021-2022



COLLABORATE
2022-2023



EMPOWER
2023-2024

How Was The Public Involved?

The comprehensive plan was created with extensive input from over 2,500 community members, local businesses, and stakeholders over a five year process with early preparation beginning in 2019. Engagement included a survey garnering 970 opinions, four years of in-person engagement over over 30 events and meetings, a monthly radio show, and numerous mailing and social media campaigns. This Plan reflects our shared vision for Shenandoah County's future, aiming to balance growth with preservation. Unlike communities that hire consultants, the Plan was crafted by the Citizen's Advisory Committee, a group of 13 County residents, based on all of the public input they had heard, discussions with staff, and collaborative reconciliation meetings between the CAC, PC, and BOS.

Why Have A Plan?

Each locality in the State of Virginia is required to have a Comprehensive Plan per Section 15.2-2223 of the Virginia Code. We also rely on our plan in order to garner funds to repair roads, bridges, and sidewalks and in order to justify grants for improvements to major public services be it personnel or buildings and ensure our community's voice is heard.

How Does The Plan Interface With Other Aspects?

Shenandoah County's vision for 2045 is closely linked to various plans, policies, and ordinances. The Plan outlines the vision for the future, while zoning and subdivision ordinances ensure its implementation. Additionally, the Plan details the community's infrastructure needs, with the financing outlined in a Capital Improvement Plan, which is a long-range, unfunded budget for desired improvements.

Is This Our First Plan?

Shenandoah County has been actively planning for its future since 1973, and this is our fourth comprehensive plan.

Does This Tie Our Hands?

No, not financially or politically but it is a guide for us as we move into the future.

A PLAN FOR ACTION

CHAPTER VISION

GOALS

1

2

3

4

5

OBJECTIVES



STRATEGIES



ACTIONS



Nearly 250 years ago a man stood up in a church a few blocks down from the County Government Building. He told his congregation that to everything there is a season, a time to pray and a time to fight. We as a community in adopting this plan accept the truth that there is a time to plan and a time to act, and that time is now. Our action plan seeks to make this belief a reality through taking large ideas from very general vision statements and narrow them down through goals and objectives to strategies and detail oriented actions as seen in the diagram to the left.

ORGANIZATION

This plan is one of five documents that guide the County.

1: COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

An aspirational visionary guide made from two documents:

THE REPORT

This document summarizes 5 years worth of reports, meetings, workshops, and conversations into a succinct, big idea focused document.

THE ACTION PLAN

The Action Plan lays out the vision for each chapter, goals to accomplish that vision, along with objectives, strategies and actions.

2 & 3: ZONING & SUBDIVISION

Specific rules that can be enforced on how land is used.

4: CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Five year financial plan for new buildings and equipment.

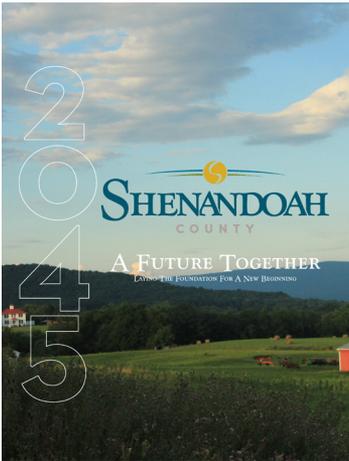
5: BUDGET

Annual plan on how to finance County operations.

TOOLS TO USE THE PLAN

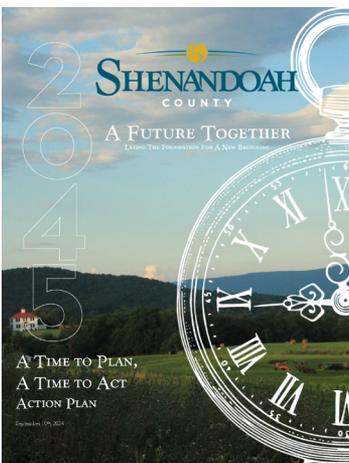
The Report

The *Shenandoah 2045 Report* is a strategic tool for anyone looking to act in the county by providing a comprehensive vision for Shenandoah County's future. It sets out the community's long-term goals and values, such as balancing growth with the preservation of rural and agricultural character. No matter your background, The Report helps you understand the overarching priorities of the county and ensures your projects align with community expectations. You can use the report to inform your proposals, validate decisions, and demonstrate that your actions support the county's long-term vision. It serves as a guiding document to keep projects on track with broader community goals, making it useful for planning, investment, and collaboration.



The Action Plan

The Action Plan is a hands-on guide for taking concrete action in Shenandoah County. For those looking to implement projects—whether in infrastructure, business, or community services—this document breaks down the broad vision of the report into specific, actionable steps. If you are involved in executing a project, the Action Plan provides clear goals, strategies, and timelines to follow, ensuring that your actions contribute directly to county priorities. It gives you the roadmap for implementation, such as the exact strategies to improve housing, transportation, or environmental sustainability. This tool allows you to move from planning to action, ensuring that your efforts are aligned with County visions and making it easier to measure success.



Tools On The Website

The Toolkit (This document!)

There are five other documents just like the one you are looking at right now! We have broken the Comprehensive Plan down into digestible parts based on the user groups. You can choose to consume the information either in a static print version like this, or check out our more dynamic online storymap. Either way we hope these documents make it easier for us to build A Future Together and act.



The Policy Map

The policy map takes all of the maps from The Report and The Action Plan and puts them in one accessible and interactive space. It also provides each chapter's maps and information in individual formats with extra data that did not fit into the Comprehensive Plan such as dynamic data updated regularly from the Census Bureau so its easier to base decisions on adopted maps and updated data.



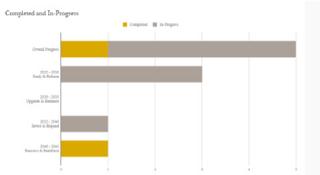
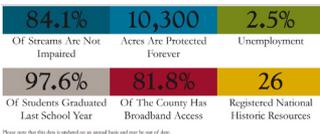
The Data Dashboard

The data dashboard serves the role a traditional comprehensive plan would serve in many communities, which is being a report on multiple data points. The difference in the dashboard and a static report document is this is updated regularly by various sources including the Bureau of Labor Statistics and VDOT. Examine data per chapter or larger land use data in the main data dashboard.

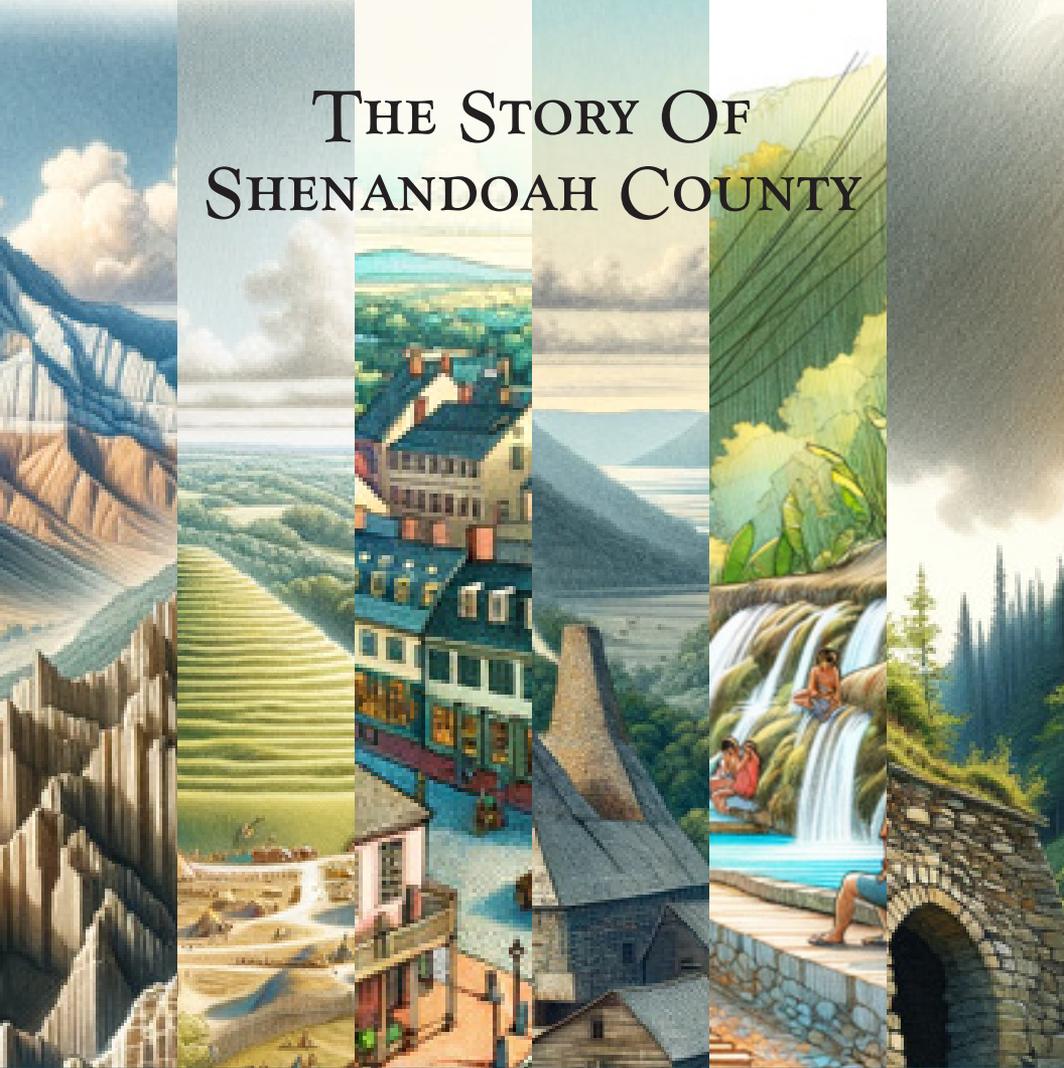


The Progress Tab

Our number one concern for the future was to hold ourselves accountable. We hope to do this and keep everyone updated with our progress tab which has key indicators for each big ideas as well as a progress chart showing the status of implementation. Note that this information is expected to be updated annually so there may be some tasks completed that have not made it onto our progress tab yet.



THE STORY OF SHENANDOAH COUNTY



200 million years of erosion of the Appalachian mountains which formed 370 million years ago, formed the streams and our rich soils.

Route 11 is based on the Great Trail developed by the first human inhabitants who arrived around 15,000 B.C.E. they had villages and mound temples until mid-1600.

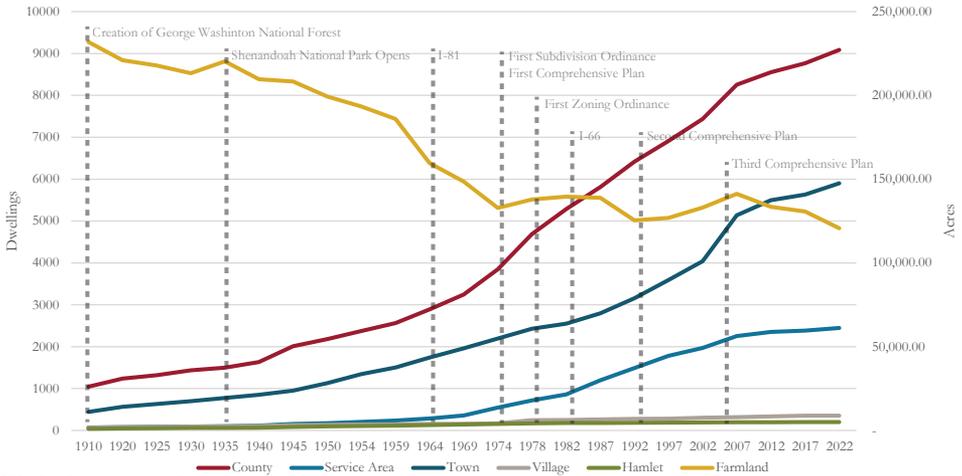
In the 17th and 18th centuries European settlers built connected communities, attached dwellings, and multi-use structures similar to their home communities.

The communities were markets for the plantation economy with grains, hemp, and livestock and the timber that fueled iron furnaces and the Confederacy.

The railroad connected places in the 1860's and in the 1890's the Dinky line enhanced mining while a tourism economy began to flourish with visits to vistas and springs.

In 1907 the iron industry collapsed, its lands became National Forests and the Dinky line was lost to private owners.

AS DWELLINGS IN THE COUNTY HAVE INCREASED, THE ACREAGE OF FARMLAND HAS DECREASED



Did you know?

Data shows that as dwellings in our community increase, the farmland acreage has decreased. This is one of the fundamental items we seek to change, we must be able to increase our resident population in our Towns, Villages, and Hamlets while sustaining our farmland. As you can see beginning with the first comprehensive plan our locality has worked to increase housing while limiting farmland lost. It is an effort we will continue.

Post World War II and Suburban Growth

After World War II, people began moving to the County for both primary homes and vacation spots due to improved road networks, including VDOT improvements in the 1930s and Interstate 81 in the 1960s. This made it easier to purchase farmland and develop housing. Despite efforts in comprehensive plans since 1973 to limit farmland loss, housing has continued to grow outside Towns, Villages, and Hamlets.

The Great Recession and Suburbanization Decline

The 2008 Community Planning Project (CPP) addressed concerns about unregulated subdivision development in rural areas. Projections showed that if trends continued, the County could lose up to 25% of its agricultural land to residential development, creating tens of thousands of new rural lots. To mitigate this, the County updated subdivision and zoning ordinances and worked with several Towns on annexation agreements. Still, more than 50% of new housing continues to be built outside of designated growth areas.

De-suburbanization and a New Beginning

Since 2019, efforts have focused on placing rural lands into conservation easements and protecting farmland from development. This fourth Comprehensive Plan continues the vision of protecting rural areas while promoting growth in existing Towns, Villages, and Hamlets.

AN ANCESTRAL SOLUTION TO A COMMON THREAD

For sixty years Shenandoah County has been wrestling with one common thread which weaves throughout time: Suburbanization. While the emphasis on the loss of rural land due to suburbanization has always been a concern, the greater threat is the loss of a sense of community and place. This means that the solution to this common thread is not to cut all development off entirely but rather to rethink the form that development takes so we build more places for people. We find that solution by looking to the past to help us with the present.

When our ancestors first stepped foot in Shenandoah County they laid out their new communities based on where they came from. These places were naturally dense, walkable, and had a variety of different uses with a hard edge to the working lands. This model both protected productive agricultural lands and made the most use of land which the community invested infrastructure.



Woodstock founder from Zweibrücken, GER



Strasburg founder from Strasbourg, FR



Toms Brook founder from Steinweiler, GER



Conicville & Orkney Springs founders from Zurich, Switzerland



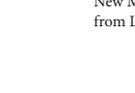
New Market founder from London, UK



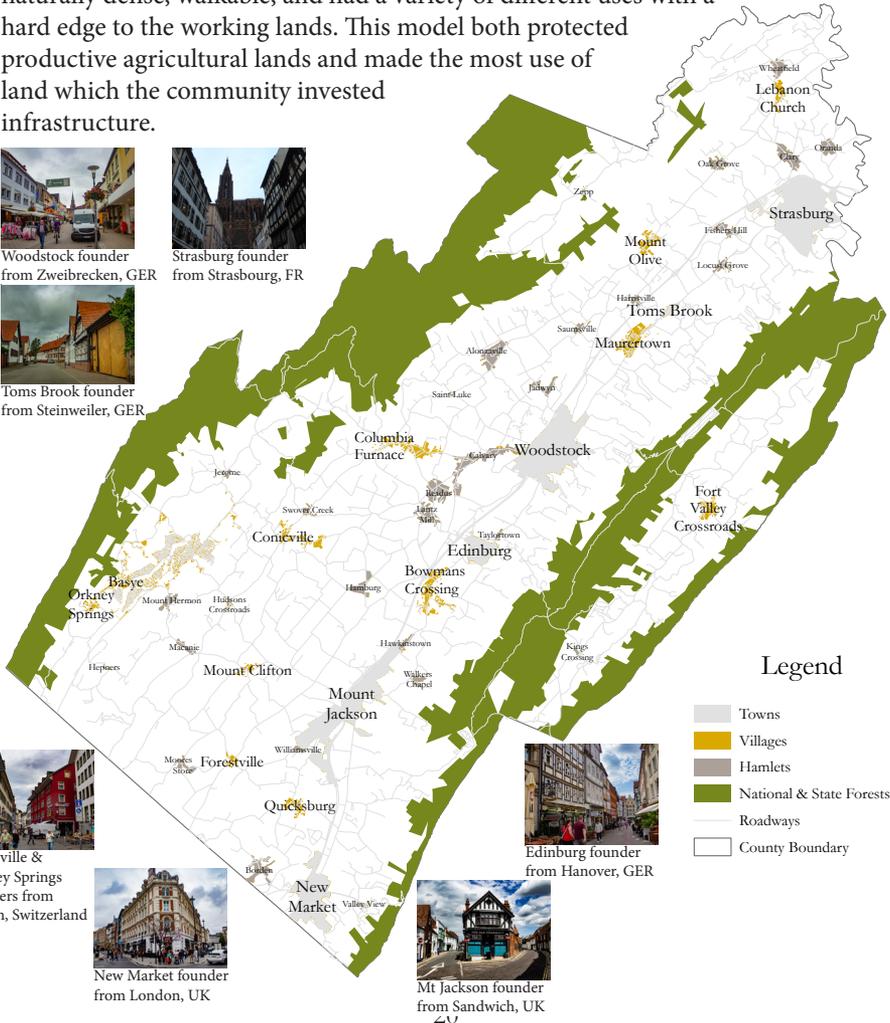
Mt Jackson founder from Sandwich, UK



Edinburg founder from Hanover, GER



Woodstock founder from Zweibrücken, GER



Legend

- Towns
- Villages
- Hamlets
- National & State Forests
- Roadways
- County Boundary

WHAT ARE VILLAGES AND HAMLETS?

A **VILLAGE** is an established neighborhood standing free in the countryside. The strong center of a village can usually be attributed, not to the population, but to its location on a transportation corridor and presence of more than one third space.

A **HAMLET** is a neighborhood in the making. Standing free in the countryside, by virtue of its location away from transportation, the hamlet has a weak center not due to its population but the lack of multiple third spaces or a strong sense of community.

A First Place is our home. A Second Place is our workplace. Third places are where you find locals and strangers like a:



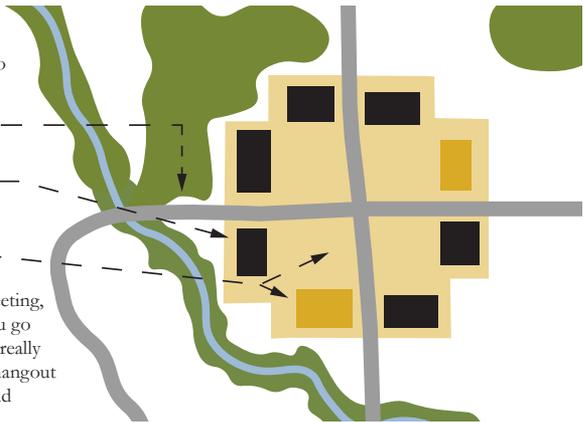
“(Imagine) eight houses are forming a square in the middle of a crossroad. So here we have a...”

Communication Route ————

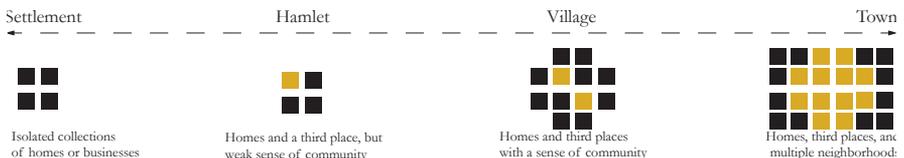
Private Spaces ————

Public Spaces ————

where we can have a meeting between inhabitants and strangers. And this meeting, is the beginning of civilization... If you go (on vacation) and find places that you really like, it will be places that have a local hangout and strangers together.” Peter Elmlund



Shenandoah County has 6 incorporated towns, 12 villages, and 36 hamlets. Our Towns started as hamlets then grew into villages. Some villages incorporated as Towns, such as Mount Pleasant which in 1826 became the Town of Mount Jackson. These places didn’t take up much land, were close to water, existed at the crux of trade routes, and were both markets and homes for the farmers. As we look to the future investment in our community we can look to the past to see how we built these places people already live and enhance them.



WHAT ARE THE 6 BIG IDEAS?

Our Six Big Ideas are the framework for Shenandoah 2045. These are core aspects of all chapters of the Action Plan and cover a variety of topics from land use to the economy and more. This framework helps facilitate all partners and stakeholders in the big picture vision we as a community have for the next twenty years.

A **CONCEPT** is a step down from a **BIG IDEA** and outlines the general approach we want to take to making the vision of the Plan a reality. These are the core values that will guide us based on the goals and objectives of the Action Plan.

A **PROPOSAL** is a step down from a **CONCEPT** and generally outlines how we could realistically implement the vision of the plan. These are the general ways we can implement the vision for the future based on the specific strategies and actions from the Action Plan.



We respect that **WATER IS LIFE**. We are committed to cherishing our water for the next generation. Knowing that clean and abundant water is finite but also vital for agriculture, economic growth, and overall well-being.



LAND IS VALUABLE to us. We keep our countryside beautiful and productive, balancing growth with preservation. Thriving farms, bustling downtowns, and scenic landscapes ensures land for generations to enjoy.



Our community is **ACTIVELY CONNECTED**. We've nurtured a community reflecting our values and actively connected with the places we live and work through streets, trails, and programming for a healthy life.



We invest in the next generation and our workforce with **QUALITY EDUCATION**. Education is the key to the next generation being prepared for the future and ensuring our workforce is versatile with market shifts.



We pride ourselves on **DEPENDABLE SERVICES**. Healthcare, public safety, and infrastructure are our backbone. Every resident feels supported and valued with these dependable services.



Our community believes **THE PAST INSPIRES THE FUTURE**. We cherish our history and learn from it. By combining old lessons with current knowledge, we make wise plans to create a better tomorrow.

CONCEPT

PROPOSAL

- A. Next Generation Foundation
- B. Community Action
- C. Lasting Infrastructure

- I. Reform Codes
- II. Conduct Studies
- III. Invest Today

- A. Maximizing Land Productivity
- B. Small Town Feel
- C. Preserving Our Landscapes

- I. Reform Codes
- II. Invest Downtown
- III. Protect Farmland

- A. Personal Freedom
- B. Culture Of Physical Activity
- C. Community Connectivity

- I. Reform Codes
- II. Enhance Connections & Spaces
- III. Community Programming

- A. Evolving Education Infrastructure
- B. Community Opportunities
- C. Workforce Readiness

- I. Quality Infrastructure
- II. Early Childhood Development
- III. Bridge Education & Workforce

- A. Integrated Service Delivery
- B. Health & Safety
- C. Dependable Infrastructure

- I. Update County Systems
- II. Reduce Healthcare Barriers
- III. Future Infrastructure

- A. Study First, Act Next
- B. Data-Driven Decisions
- C. Be Inspired

- I. Conduct Studies
- II. Integrate Data
- III. Style Guide

The Action Plan is split into eleven chapters, a summary of them is below:

Chapter I: Historical, Cultural, & Scenic Resources

These resources will be preserved and researched to be made readily available to the public.

Chapter II: Water Resources

Water is finite and we will work to ensure quality and quantity of it with suitability/sustainability.

Chapter III: Agricultural, Forestall, & Geological Resources

Priority on protecting and properly utilizing these resources intrinsically and economically.

Chapter IV: Economic Development

Public & private sectors collaborate for a supportive business environment and workforce readiness.

Chapter V: Housing

Everyone will have access to adequate housing.

Chapter VI: Community Services And Facilities

Easy access to county services and facilities, in person or online, to satisfy their personal/business needs.

Chapter VII: Education

All will have chance to a well-rounded education with applied learning and performance skills.

Chapter VIII: Health

All must have access to affordable health care within 15 minutes from home by combination of private & public.

Chapter IX: Emergency Services, Infrastructure, & Technology

Provide an integrated, responsive, and secure technology environment for exceptional county services.

Chapter X: Recreation

Access to natural resources for recreational pursuits shall be sustained and expanded.

Chapter XI: Transportation

Have quality transportation systems that are safe, efficient, and modern systems built for the 22nd century.

THE FUTURE WON'T HAPPEN OVERNIGHT

We respect that change takes time. Our action plan is split into time periods with acronyms associated with the periods explained below. We do this as we understand that improving our community is not just one action but a sequence of actions that build off of each other with each making life slightly better.

2025 - 2030
STUDY &
REFORM



We start by studying changes to keep our land, water, and communities safe and beautiful and invest properly. This includes zoning and other reforms on how land can be used to protect our farms, nature, and water. We're studying ways to help our community grow, so we set ourselves and the next generation up for success by having the information we need to act while responding to existing needs.

2030 - 2035
UPGRADE
&
ENHANCE



During this phase, we concentrate on upgrading existing infrastructure and buildings, enhancing the quality of living and working environments across our county. We will focus on modernizing our educational facilities, roads, and public spaces, to meet the community's needs. We also aim to support our local economy by fostering job creation in key sectors.

2035 - 2040
INVEST &
EXPAND



During this phase, we're focusing on building new infrastructure to better serve our community. This includes adding connections like trails and streets, utilities, and facilities that will make us stronger. We're also expanding the services we provide, making sure they're more dependable for all. This is about enhancing our way of life, and preparing for the future.

2040 - 2045
REASSESS
&
REINFORCE



As this plan nears its end, we enter a crucial phase of reassessment and reinforcement. This period calls for a collective reflection on our achievements and the challenges ahead, ensuring our infrastructure and services are robust and reliable. We'll focus on strengthening the foundation laid so we are ready for the future.

2045 - 2072
PLAN &
ASPIRE



Beyond this plan, as we move from 2045 to 2072, we approach a significant milestone: the 300th anniversary of Shenandoah County's founding. This period represents the start of a new beginning, where we, as a community, will have laid the groundwork for future prosperity. It's a time for collective visioning, preparing for future challenges and opportunities.

KEY TERMS & CONTACTS

Acronym	Full Name
All Towns	New Market Mount Jackson Edinburg Woodstock Toms Brook Strasburg
BOS	Board of Supervisors
CA	County Administration
CD	Community Development
CL	County Library
CLG	Certified Local Government
CLUM	Current Land Use Map
COR	Commissioner Of The Revenue
CT	County Treasurer
DHR	Virginia Department of Historic Resources
EOC	Emergency Operations Center
FLUM	Future Land Use Map
GIS	Geographic Information Systems
GP	General Properties
HR	Human Resources
IT	Information Technologies
Landfill	County Landfill
NSVRC	Northern Shenandoah Valley Regional Commission
P&R	Parks and Recreation
PC	Planning Commission
SCPS	Shenandoah County Public Schools
SD	Sanitary Districts
SS	Social Services
TED	Tourism and Economic Development
VCE	Virginia Cooperative Extension Office
VDH	Virginia Department of Health
VDOT	Virginia Department of Transportation
VH	Valley Health

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ljgcurrie@yahoo.com	540-436-8000
wcoggsdale@strasburgva.com	540-465-9197
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swhitesides@countylib.org	540-984-8200
See Virginia Department of Historic Resources	
See Community Development	
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