

A NORTH STAR FOR
THE PUBLIC

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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 in making a better future in Shenandoah County. 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 the public plays in implementation.

Land Use Checklist (pgs 6–7):

A checklist to help prepare for land use requests.

Future Land Use Map (pgs 12–13):

A visual representation of planned land uses over the next 20 years.

What You Love, What You Want Improved (pgs 10–11):

Your ideas matter, check out our suggestions on how to share them.

Standing up for Action (pg 12):

In order for action to happen it needs your support, here's how you can.

Taking Action (pg 13):

You can take action today! Learn some methods of making change now.

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.

WHY THIS HANDBOOK MATTERS TO YOU

We understand our mutual need: we both want to help our community.

For all of us, that means ensuring access to quality services—like strong schools, reliable infrastructure, and thriving communities—while safeguarding the rural character, scenic beauty, and agricultural heritage that make Shenandoah County unique.

So how can we make a bigger impact together?

This handbook is the answer.

By following the guidance in these pages, you'll not only help strengthen the places we call home but also ensure Shenandoah County continues to be a place we all cherish. Together, we can create a future that invests in our communities while protecting the landscapes that define us.

A Plan Built by the People, for the People:

This is your county—a place of rolling fields, scenic views, and close-knit communities. This plan was built with input from thousands of residents, and its success depends on continued public action, so why wait for change?

Every small action adds up. See something in your community that needs attention? Find a way to fix it. Rally your neighbors. Improve what you can today, and then move on to the next issue. This is a guide on how to act now.

Why You Should Care:

This isn't just a government document—it's your guide to ensuring Shenandoah County stays a place where:

- We all thrive, with services that meet today's needs.
- Scenic views and farmland is preserved for future generations.
- We focus on areas where infrastructure and services already exist.

Your voice is key to shaping this future. Together, we can ensure Shenandoah County remains the home we all love—while preparing for the opportunities and challenges ahead.

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.



ELECTED OFFICIALS

Elected leaders are key to upholding the plan as they must commit to the plan's goals and objectives. It's vital they adopt and consistently apply the plan in land use and policy decisions, leading the way in realizing the vision to ensure responsible, community-focused growth.



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.



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.



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.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE PUBLIC

Your Role in using the Plan:

As residents your participation is essential to implementing Shenandoah 2045. This Plan was built by the community, and its success relies on the continued involvement of neighbors coming together to make collective progress. By staying informed, taking action, and supporting shared efforts, you play a vital role in shaping Shenandoah County's future. How you can take action to fulfill the plan's vision:

Be Prepared for Land Use Requests:

Understand how land use proposals impact the community by using tools like the Future Land Use Map (FLUM). Stay informed about requests and be ready to provide feedback to ensure decisions address community needs.

What You Love, What You Want Improved:

John Adamson from the Citizens Advisory Committee posed this question in 2021, and it remains vital today. Reflect on what you love about Shenandoah County and what you want to see improved. Share your ideas with your neighbors, community leaders, and county staff. Shenandoah 2045 is a living document, and your thoughts shape our collective future.

Stand Up for Action:

Channel the spirit of Peter Muhlenberg by championing projects and policies that align with the Plan. Attend public meetings, speak up for shared priorities, and rally your neighbors to advocate for progress.

Take Local Action:

Talk with your neighbors to address local issues, from immediate concerns like road maintenance to long-term initiatives that support the Plan. Organize or join efforts like tree plantings, stream clean-ups, or trail-building projects. By acting locally and collaboratively, you can make meaningful progress.

Your Next Steps:

1. Review the Plan to understand its goals and how it affects your area.
2. Join or organize events that contribute to Shenandoah 2045's vision.
3. Support projects that build momentum for a stronger community.

BE PREPARED FOR LAND USE REQUESTS

When land use requests, such as rezonings or special use permits, are proposed, they can shape the future of Shenandoah County. Whether the request involves housing, businesses, or conservation projects, staying informed and proactive allows you to advocate for what benefits the whole community while protecting what matters most to you.

How to Stay Informed

1. Know the Process
 - Land use requests are posted in the public newspaper and on the County website two weeks prior to a public hearing, around the same time any properties that abut the proposal site will receive a letter from County Staff. Applicants are asked to talk with neighbors in advance of advertizing. At the public hearing the staff present the general proposal, the project lead may pitch their project, then members of the public have three minutes each to speak. The Planning Commission makes a recomendation to the Board of Supervisors who make the final vote to approve or deny a request.
2. Learn About the Comprehensive Plan
 - Use Shenandoah 2045 and the Future Land Use Map (FLUM) to understand what types of development are planned for specific areas. Check if the proposed project aligns with the Plan.
3. Consider Permit Conditions
 - Conditions are requirements or limitations attached to a land use approval that ensure projects address community needs. These can include landscaping, traffic improvements, protecting open space, or more. Without conditions, developers aren't legally bound to fulfill promises made during discussions, so working with them early is key.
4. Work With Neighbors to Communicate with Project Proposers
 - Talk with your neighbors to see if they have the same concerns. Multiple people sharing a concern is more impactful than one individual and can help with negotiating with project proposer. Once you have consensus on what to request, reach out to project proposers to share concerns and suggest conditions that could improve the project's alignment.
5. Engage in the Public Process
 - Attend meetings to express your support or concerns. Provide constructive feedback and suggest conditions that could enhance the project.

The following is a table to determine the impact of a request:

#	Question	Yes	No
1	Is the request in line with the Future Land Use Map (FLUM)?	Advocate for approval.	Suggest conditions or denial.
2	Is the design pedestrian-friendly (e.g., fronts the street, parking in the rear)?	Advocate for approval.	Suggest redesign or denial.
3	Preserves or enhance shistoric landmarks or scenic views? (Chapter 1)	Advocate for approval.	Suggest conditions or denial.
4	Protects water resources like streams, wetlands, or local well capacity? (Chapter 2)	Advocate for approval.	Suggest conditions or denial.
5	Is the land better suited for agriculture or forestry rather than development? (Chapter 3)	Advocate for approval.	Suggest conditions or denial.
6	Contributes to job creation, downtown revitalization, or needed services? (Chapter 4)	Advocate for approval.	Suggest conditions or denial.
7	Does the project support affordable or diverse housing types? (Chapter 5)	Advocate for approval.	Suggest conditions or denial.
8	Will the project strain public services or infrastructure? (Chapter 6)	Suggest conditions or denial.	Advocate for approval.
9	Does the proposal consider the needs of schools? (Chapter 7)	Advocate for approval.	Suggest conditions or denial.
10	Will the project enhance public health? (Chapter 8)	Advocate for approval.	Suggest conditions or denial.
11	Does it align with emergency service needs or improve public safety? (Chapter 9)	Advocate for approval.	Suggest conditions or denial.
12	Does it create recreational opportunities? (Chapter 10)	Advocate for approval.	Suggest conditions or denial.
13	Will the project promote walkability, bike lanes, or traffic mitigation? (Chapter 11)	Advocate for approval.	Suggest conditions or denial.
14	Aligned with most questions?	Advocate for approval.	Suggest conditions or denial.

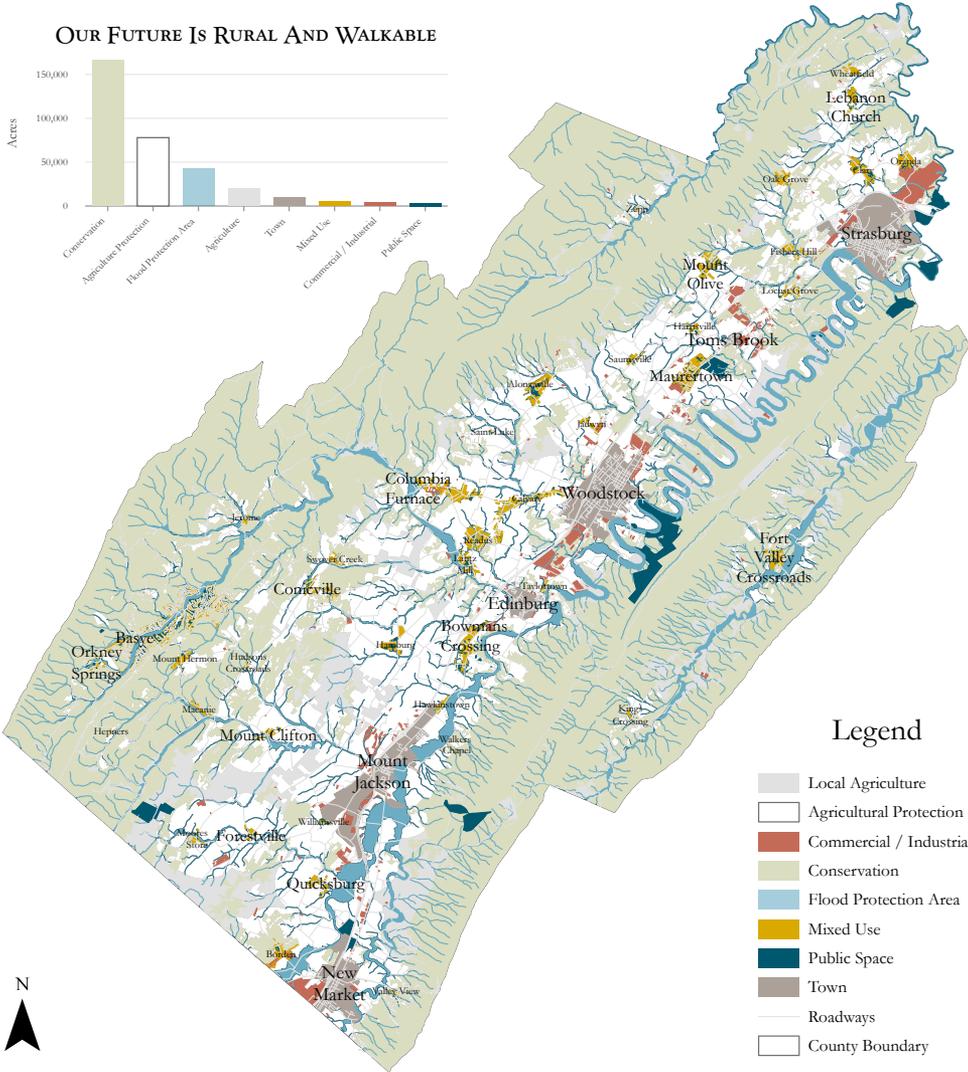
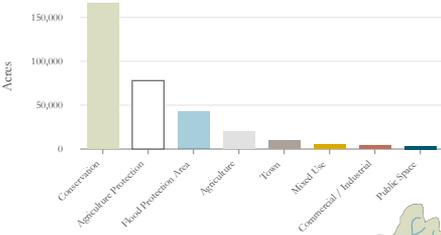
Example of a condition:

1. To restrict noise and light pollution, parking will be limited to designated areas on the preliminary site plan dated ##/##/####.

A Future Land Use Map shows how a community plans to use its land over the next 20 years. It outlines spaces for homes, businesses, parks, and more, reflecting the community's vision. In Shenandoah County, the focus is on staying rural, with four zones to protect natural resources and promote agriculture. We also support industry and commerce, while investing in our Towns, Villages, and Hamlets to diversify the tax base. Service provisions are most available in Towns with the villages of Basye, Orkney Springs, and Maurertown following.

FUTURE LAND USE MAP OF SHENANDOAH COUNTY

OUR FUTURE IS RURAL AND WALKABLE



Legend

- Local Agriculture
- Agricultural Protection
- Commercial / Industrial
- Conservation
- Flood Protection Area
- Mixed Use
- Public Space
- Town
- Roadways
- County Boundary



Source: Shenandoah County GIS, Virginia Employment Commission, State Of Virginia
 Date: 2-22-2024
 Author: Tyler Hinkle, AICP

Use Descriptions

Conservation

These are forested lands including the National and State Forests but also 100 acre or more tracts of forest throughout the County conserved for scenic appeal, rural homes, and the creation of wood related products.



Agricultural Protection

Imagine open fields with cows, crops, apple trees, and other agriculture. These lands are just outside Towns, Villages, and Hamlets and the most productive places for agriculture. We want to keep it that way.



Local Agriculture

These are farms far away from any settled place with soils that may not be the best for farming. But these areas make for excellent larger scale operations as well as the homesteader who might want to live in the countryside.



Commercial / Industrial

These lands are either already being used for commercial or industrial purposes or have been identified as key sites due to poor agricultural soils, close proximity to existing businesses, or access to public water and sewer.



Mixed Use

Imagine your favorite downtown, a quaint street with various shops, places to eat, or even the quiet residential street with your neighbors on their front porches waving at you as you walk by. We want that experience here.



Public Space

These are your parks, schools, government centers, but also your semi-public third spaces like churches, Ruritan Clubs, and other non-profits where you can enjoy the outdoors or the comradery of community.



Flood Protection Overlay District

These are lands listed on FEMA floodplain maps, in the breach area of dams, and 100 feet from streams. These areas make for great agricultural fields, parks, and other uses that don't invest in new structures due to flooding.



WHAT YOU LOVE, WHAT YOU WANT IMPROVED

In 2021, John Adamson from the Citizens Advisory Committee asked a simple but powerful question: What do you love about Shenandoah County, and what do you want to see improved? This question remains vital today, as Shenandoah 2045 is a living document shaped by your thoughts and ideas. By reflecting on what makes our county special and what could make it better, you help define our future together.

Key Steps to Reflect and Share Your Vision:

1. Identify and Share Your Priorities:
 - Write down what you love and what you want to improve. Reach out to Shenandoah County's Community Development staff at 540-459-6185 to share your ideas. Your input can influence updates to the Comprehensive Plan, which will update in 2030, 2035, and 2045.
2. Get Involved Locally:
 - Gather friends and neighbors to discuss shared priorities. This could be as simple as hosting a coffee chat or organizing a small meeting at a community center.
 - Attend town meetings, workshops, or local fairs to connect with other residents and share your thoughts with county representatives.
3. Take Small, Direct Actions:
 - Advocate for improvements like crosswalks, trail connections, or restored public spaces with local officials or forming a working group.
 - Organize volunteer efforts to tackle immediate community needs, such as a clean-up day or planting native flowers in shared spaces
4. Collaborate with Others
 - Partner with local schools, businesses, or civic groups to turn your ideas into reality. These collaborations often provide the resources and support needed to tackle larger projects.

Examples of What You Can Do:

1. If you want more outdoor spaces, organize a meeting with local leaders to propose turning underused lots into parks or gardens.
2. Concerned about traffic safety? Start a petition to install traffic calming measures and present it to the county.
3. Love your local library? Rally neighbors to advocate for expanded services or organize a fundraiser to support new programs.

If you want change in your community, don't wait. Plan, advocate, and take action.

STAND UP FOR ACTION

Building our future is a shared responsibility, and everyone has a role to play. Anyone can make a big difference by speaking up, getting involved, and encouraging their neighbors to do the same. Here's how you can help shape your community:

Steps to Make Your Voice Heard:

- **Spot the Issues That Matter to You:**
Notice problems in your area, like potholes, lack of sidewalks, or unsafe parks. Use Shenandoah 2045 as a guide to see how your concerns fit into the county's long-term goals.
- **Talk to Your Neighbors:**
Start conversations about what needs fixing. A casual chat at a local event or over coffee can spark ideas and build support for change.
- **Go to Public Meetings:**
Attend county or town meetings to share your concerns. Speak from your experience and suggest practical solutions. Officials are more likely to act when they hear directly from residents.
- **Support Projects In-Person or from Afar:**
Projects in the community impact you, from new workforce housing to better parks. No matter where they are support them in-person, with letters, phone calls, social media, or email.
- **Work as a Team:**
Partner with others who share your goals. Whether it's a church group, school club, or just a handful of friends, teamwork makes efforts effective.
- **Celebrate Small Wins:**
When something gets done—like a cleaned-up park or a repaired road—let others know! Share progress on social media or through local newsletters to keep people excited and involved.

Hypothetical Example of Standing Up for Action:

Residents in a neighborhood were worried about speeding cars. After talking with neighbors, they presented their case at a Board meeting and asked for help, sharing examples of near-accidents. The Board implemented traffic calming measures, such as narrowing lanes with painted medians and adding raised crosswalks. These changes slowed cars down and made streets safer.

TAKE LOCAL ACTION

What is Local Action?

Local action is about taking responsibility for the future of your community by identifying problems, rallying support, and working together to solve them. It begins with asking questions: What needs to change? Who shares my concerns? What resources can we use to make progress? Local action is built on the idea that small, collective efforts can lead to big changes. By organizing neighbors, influencing decision-makers, and creating visible results, you become part of a movement that drives Shenandoah County toward its shared vision for 2045. Ask not what Shenandoah County can do for you, but what you can do for Shenandoah County.

To succeed, start by observing and listening. What are the pressing issues in your neighborhood? Who is already working on them? What simple steps can you take to build momentum? Remember, every movement begins with a conversation, and every solution starts with a plan.

How to Think Like a Community Leader

1. Look Around You:
 - Identify challenges in your community, such as neglected spaces, lack of connectivity, or underutilized resources.
 - Talk to your neighbors to understand their concerns and priorities.
2. Dream Big, Start Small:
 - Set achievable goals that align with Shenandoah 2045's vision. Small wins build trust and enthusiasm.
 - Focus on projects that make visible improvements, like planting trees, cleaning up a stream, or installing public art.
3. Organize and Collaborate:
 - Create a network of supporters by hosting meetings, using social media, or forming volunteer groups.
 - Partner with schools, local businesses, and civic organizations to expand your reach.
4. Advocate for Change
 - Attend public meetings, write to local officials, and use your voice to champion community priorities.
 - Use tools like the Future Land Use Map (FLUM) to back your proposals with data and align them with the county's goals.

Be a Neighbor Who Cares:

Local action is about stepping up to address the challenges and opportunities in your own backyard. It's about neighbors helping neighbors and taking pride in creating a better Shenandoah County. Here's how you can make an impact:

1. Support Neighbors and Address Immediate Needs:

- Spot an abandoned home? Reach out to the owner to discuss cleanup or restoration efforts. Organize a community day to beautify the property.
- Work with local housing organizations to assist those facing homelessness by offering your time, skills, or donations including clean up days.
- Start a food drive or contribute to existing ones to support children and families in need. Partner with schools, churches, and local food banks.

2. Enhance and Beautify Shared Spaces:

- Partner with neighbors to plant trees, restore stream banks, reduce erosion, and create scenic spaces for fishing and recreation.
- Join the VDOT Adopt-a-Spot program to maintain local parks, roadsides, or community spaces.
- Host seasonal clean-up events to paint fences, repair benches, and add flowers or landscaping to public areas.

3. Celebrate and Preserve Community Identity:

- Collaborate with local artists to design murals, sculptures, or interpretive signage that reflects your town's unique culture and history.
- Encourage shopping small by organizing events like markets or festivals that bring neighbors together to support local shops and craftspeople.
- Advocate for agribusiness initiatives, such as farm-to-table dining or CSA programs, that highlight the region's agricultural strengths.

4. Build Stronger Connections Through Shared Efforts:

- Transform vacant plots into gardens where residents can grow fresh produce while building a sense of community.
- Start small by fixing existing trails or sidewalks. Clear overgrown plants, patch cracks, and add benches to make them useful again. If new sidewalks or paths are needed and the Government won't build them for years, gather local help. By working together, neighbors can pool time, materials, and effort to build their own. It's harder work, but it gets the job done faster.

Hypothetical Example of Local Action in a Village:

Residents noticed a derelict building on an abandoned lot and contacted the absentee owner, who donated it to a local organization for a tax benefit. The organization, tax-exempt, worked with neighbors to clear the lot, plant gardens, and add picnic tables. This effort revitalized the space and brought the community together. The organization oversees the property, while a group of community members handles regular upkeep. The effort improved the area, strengthened community ties, and inspired future projects including new businesses to locate near the new park.

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.

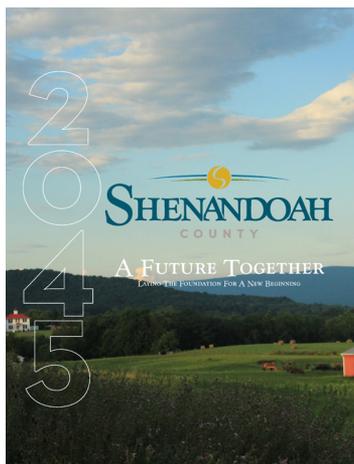
4: CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Five year financial plan for new buildings and equipment.

5: BUDGET

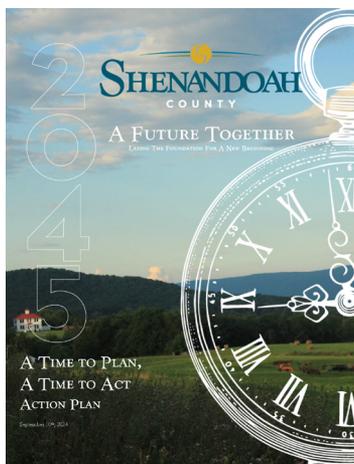
Annual plan on how to finance County operations.

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.



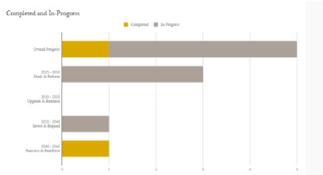
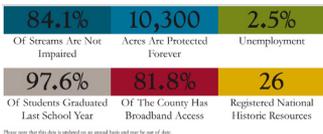
The Data Dashboard

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.



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



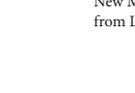
New Market founder from London, UK



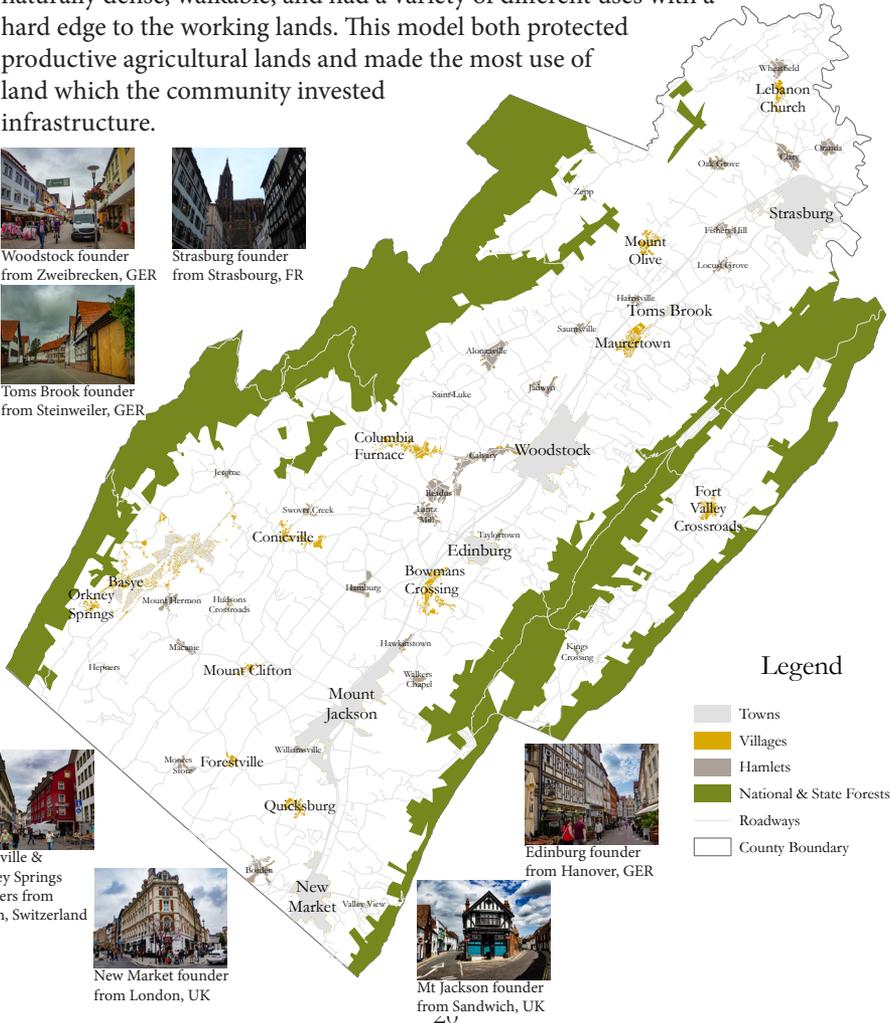
Mt Jackson founder from Sandwich, UK



Edinburg founder from Hanover, GER



Woodstock founder from Zweibrücken, GER



Conicville & Orkney Springs founders from Zurich, Switzerland



New Market founder from London, UK



Edinburg founder from Hanover, GER



Mt Jackson founder from Sandwich, UK

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:



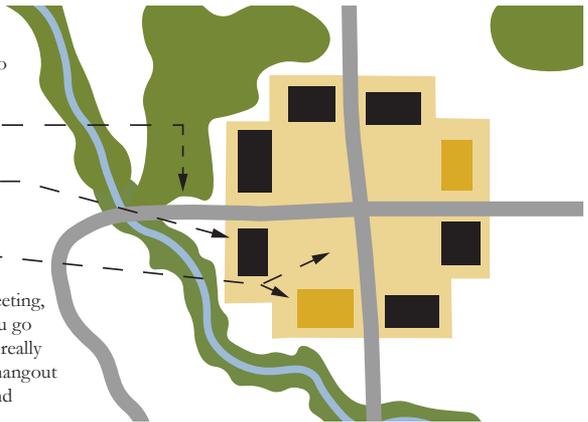
“(Imagine) eight houses are forming a square in the middle of a crossroad. So here we have a...”

Communication Route —

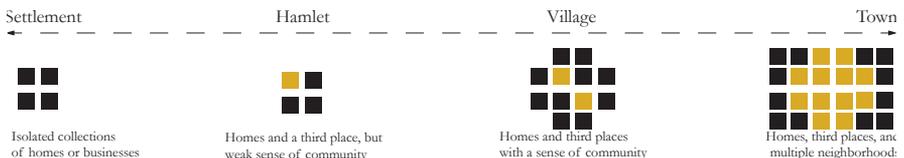
Private Spaces —

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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