

Chapter 9:

Growth Management

Design and Maps updated June 2016

1.0 Introduction

Communities and their rural environments evolve over time and are affected by the actions of local landowners, the comprehensive 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;
- ensures preservation of its natural beauty and unique, historic character by strictly adhering to the goals and objectives of its Comprehensive Plan.

2.0 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. Figure 9-A depicts a generalized future land use map for the County. Chapter 10 focuses on implementation recommendations for the period of 2005-2010. 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.

3.0 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.

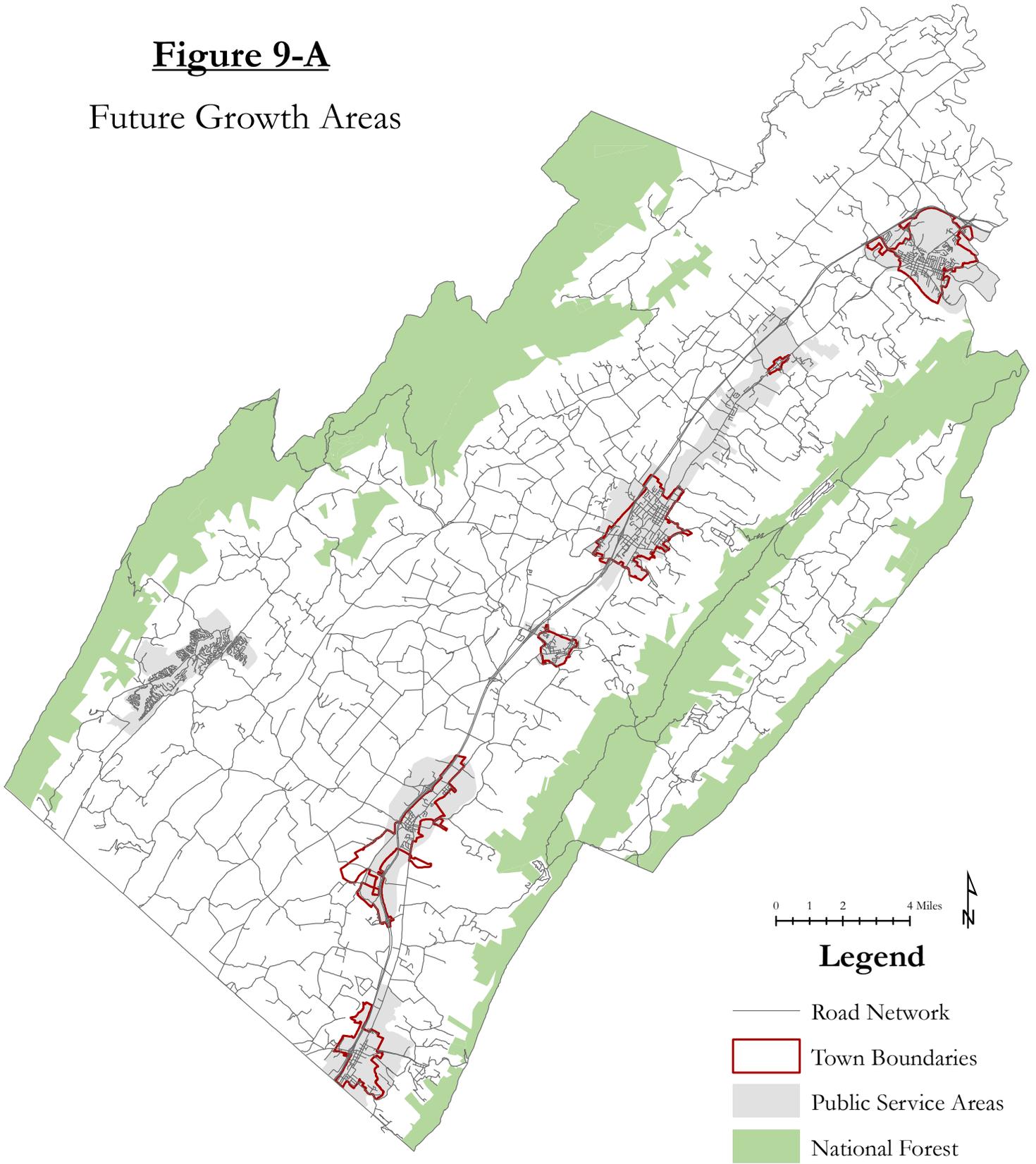
Goal 6: Provide for the improvement of public facilities and for the delivery of necessary public services.

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

Figure 9-A

Future Growth Areas



0 1 2 4 Miles



Legend

- Road Network
- Town Boundaries
- Public Service Areas
- National Forest

Map by Garrett T Morgan 2016

manage the County's growth and development.

4.0 Growth Objectives and Implementation Strategies

4.1 Natural Resources

Goal: Preserve and enhance the natural environment of the County.

Objective 1.1: To protect the natural environment from damage due to development activity.

To achieve this objective, the County shall protect the natural resources and respect development limitations of slope, soils, geology, and water resources. The County shall also support the expansion of acreage in agricultural and forestall districts for their contributions to the economic base and environmental quality.

Objective 1.2: Provide for development according to the carrying capacity of the environment.

To achieve this, the County shall use multiple tools including but not limited to: overlay zones, limited development in areas identified as having high potential for groundwater pollution; protecting sinkholes, and limiting density which are identified as critical areas for septic systems.

Objective 1.3: Preserve and adopt specific measures to protect the Shenandoah River, other streams, and the County's ground water.

To achieve this the County shall regulate development in flood plains and promote landowners' participation in hazard mitigation programs that will reduce future dangers of flooding; develop and implement a groundwater protection plan; identify priority watersheds and adopt specific measures to protect sinkholes, streams, and wetlands. The Count shall also assist towns and other public water suppliers in protecting public water supplies, including wellheads and aquifer recharge areas.

Objective 1.4: Require industrial compliance with environmental standards.

The County shall support State agency implementation of environmental standards, provide for review of industrial proposals by state environmental agencies, and include performance requirements in zoning and site plan regulations for industry.

4.2 Regional Setting & History

Goal: To protect and promote the historic resources in Shenandoah County.

Objective 2.1: Preserve individual properties and sites throughout the county.

To achieve this objective, the County shall complete additional surveys and nomination of eligible properties and rural historic districts to the Virginia and National registries as well as engage with residents and businesses who occupy or own properties that may be eligible for historic designation.

The County shall require all development proposals to identify historic and prehistoric features and require specific plans to address these features. The County shall work to promote historic resources and encourage public and private preservation of these resources through the following 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 for funding opportunities and application for grants associated with historic preservation.

Objective 2.2: Protect and enhance battlefield sites throughout the County.

The County shall support the implementation of the Shenandoah Valley Civil War Battlefields National Historic District preservation plans; 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 Road at Fisher's Hill; and refrain from approving infrastructure or capital projects such as solid waste disposal facilities, schools, or communication towers. The County shall consider conveying conservation easement on County-owned land at Fisher's Hill and Tom's Brook Battlefields to state and local easement holding bodies. The County shall explore implementation methods that the County can commit toward battlefield preservation efforts such as the Purchase of Development Rights, agricultural and forestal districts, agricultural support programs and a battlefield preservation overlay district.

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 3.1: Guide major development to locate in and around the towns, utility, and public service areas.

The County shall coordinate zoning in adjacent areas around towns with zoning in the towns so as to ensure compatibility. It shall identify potential public service areas and seek annexation agreements or urban growth area plans with towns to define those areas; encourage uniform town subdivision regulations; and create incentives for development where public services are available.

Objective 3.2: Maintain the rural and open space character of areas outside of the public service areas.

To achieve this objective, the County shall confine all urban forms of land development to the public service areas; 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. The County shall consider the cluster housing concept for subdivisions and set the open space requirement to seventy percent. The County shall encourage rural property owners to place their land in agricultural and forestall districts; consider the purchase of development rights of strategically located high quality rural property; as well as encouraging the use of conservation, scenic, and historic or other voluntary easements to permanently preserve land.

Objective 3.3: Guide future commercial land uses to locate where there is access to major transportation corridors and where public utility services are available.

The County shall consider locations carefully when evaluating rezoning request; provide for adequate access to and avoiding congestion along various roadways; coordinate placement of utilities with developments and the town/service authorities; and establish adequate buffer zones between residential and commercial and industrial areas to maintain property values and physical attractiveness.

Objective 3.4: Guide future industrial land uses to locate near the interstate corridor and interchanges where public utility services are available and adequate transportation facilities exist.

The County shall promote new industry to locate in the existing industrial parks whenever feasible; provide for adequate access to and for ameliorating congestion along roadways to accommodate the safe and efficient movement of people and goods. The County shall coordinate placement of utilities with development and the towns/service authorities; encourage light non-polluting industry and business that will benefit the economy and ecology of the county; promote industrial uses in “park” settings with adequate distance and aesthetic qualities in relation to neighboring uses and roadways; and ensure there is adequate ground or surface water to support any new industry. Along I-81, businesses that require maximum access should be placed at interchanges to retain open spaces along the interstate and preserve the natural beauty of the Valley.

4. Economy

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

Objective 4.1: Encourage the development of existing and new commercial and industrial activities.

The County shall encourage the development of existing and new commercial and industrial activities, continue the activities that were required for the Virginia Certification Program; establish and maintain an adequate database of information to support economic development activities; and emphasize the recruitment of higher wage companies; those that require a better educated

work force, a more highly-skilled workforce, a more technically-oriented and knowledge-oriented workforce.

Objective 4.2: Support travel and tourism related activities.

The County shall promote tourism and destination marketing; encourage the protection of scenic beauty and historic sites; enhance recreational facilities; and support the implementation of the Shenandoah Valley Battlefields National Historic District.

Objective 4.3: Maintain and promote the role of agriculture as part of the basic economy of the County:

The County shall 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. The County shall promote the health and growth of agriculture as an industry; encourage diversity in agricultural production; encourage better marketing of agricultural products; provide agricultural educational opportunities for youth.

5. Housing

Goal: Promote affordable housing for all segments of the population.

Objective 5.1: Provide for a variety of housing types and locations.

The County shall promote equal housing opportunity for all and encourage the creation of quality housing through land use ordinances and building codes.

Objective 5.2: Reduce the cost of housing.

The County shall provide for a range of housing types and styles consistent with a town/rural environment and local incomes and encourage maintenance of the existing housing stock with rehabilitation and historic preservation activities as appropriate.

Objective 5.3: Encourage energy efficient housing types and patterns.

The County shall 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 1: The County shall provide adequate services and facilities to serve

planned land uses and development; delineate service areas around towns and phase development within those services areas consistent with the availability of services and improve the County's school facilities to meet valid need. The County shall also ensure that all infrastructure required for development be entirely or partly financed by the developers.

Objective 6.2: Contribute to the needs of the community with parks and recreation facilities for citizens of all ages.

The County shall continue to develop the County's regional and town parks; insure that all appropriate recreational facilities are provided; provide a recreational programs and activities; and provide a County-sponsored performing arts facility.

Objective 6.3: Improve the capability for fire and rescue service dispatching and response.

The County shall continue to develop a parcel-based geographic information system (GIS) for the County and tie the computer mapping into emergency dispatching operations;

Objective 6.4: Comply with state and federal requirements for the disposal of solid waste

The County shall promote recycling and waste-minimization efforts through public education; development and implement a county-wide recycling program' continue to promote regional cooperation on solid waste disposal issues; and to participate in regional solid waste planning and encourage to do the same.

Objective 6.5: As part of the annual budget process implement capital projects through Capital Improvement Plans.

The County shall conduct a fiscal analysis of trends in County revenues and expenditure to determine relative fiscal capacity for expanded services and capital projects; maintain a County CIP as part of the budget process; and encourage all towns and other country service agencies to have capital improvement programs.

7. Transportation

Goal: Provide a safe and efficient transportation system throughout the County.

Objective 7.1: Integrate transportation planning with land use planning.

The County shall coordinate land use planning and decisions with transportation; require that adequate roadways are provided for before rezoning or subdivisions are approved; coordinate transportation planning with the approved Old Valley Pike Corridor Plan.

Objective 7.2: Improve the secondary road system in the County while maintaining the rural character of the County.

The County shall widen rights-of-way and roadways only where necessary for safety; improve existing roadway surfaces with pave-in-place technologies; develop better drainage along roads where flooding occurs; and require subdivision roads in public services to meet urban standards.

Objective 7.3: Lobby VDOT to improve access to I-81 and the primary highway system.

The County shall reduce congestion at interchanges through reconstruction and transportation system management measures; prevent capacity from deteriorating as additional commercial development proceeds; and provide for rigorous review of proposed projects and determination of traffic measures needed. The County shall require traffic impact analyses for larger developments and ensure that all improvements to the highway system use adequate design to limit impact on the county's view-sheds and natural resources.

Objective 7.4: Encourage the provision of a full range of transportation options.

The County shall support exploration of a rail solution to Interstate congestion provide for adequate and safe pedestrian and bicycle travel; encourage public transportation initiatives by the private sector; and 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 1: Maintain the Comprehensive Plan process to implement the Generalized Future Land Use Map which presents a composite of recommended plan amendments.

The County shall conduct a plan review annually; prepare updates to individual sections, if required, on a more frequent basis; conduct special planning studies as conditions warrant; review and update the implementation section annually as part of the plan review process.

Objective 2: Provide for adequate personnel and financial resources to manage future growth.

The County shall provide staffing as required to assure effective plan analysis and implementation; provide a mechanism for continuity between the Comprehensive Plan and the actions of the Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors; and indicate for each action whether or not it conforms with the Comprehensive Plan.