

## Executive Summary

The following section identifies the Warren County Comprehensive Plan's goals and objectives. To obtain more detail, background information, and methods of implementation reference the appropriate chapter within the plan.

### Chapter 3: Environment and Natural Resources

Goal: To preserve and improve the environmental quality of Warren County through measures which protect natural resources and environmentally sensitive air, lands, and waters.

Objectives:

- A. Institute measures to protect the quality of surface waters within the County, including the Shenandoah River's North and South forks, creeks, runs, and smaller tributaries of the Shenandoah River, as well as, watershed and associated tributaries which drain into the environmentally sensitive Potomac River and the Chesapeake Bay.
- B. Protect and conserve fragile ground water resources within the County's unique hydrology (i.e. karst terrain and thin soils).
- C. Evaluate existing problems relating to failing septic systems and well water contamination.
- D. Protect County wetland resources, including springs.
- E. Protect and conserve public and private forest resources to prevent soil erosion and damage to views, vistas, and watershed areas.
- F. Protect the important natural function of rivers, streams, and floodplains by encouraging appropriate use and preservation of natural vegetation.
- G. Minimize runoff and sedimentation associated with agricultural and development activities (including industrial, residential, and commercial activities) particularly in steep slope areas.
- H. Identify and protect important plant and wildlife habitats, including aquatic life.
- I. Require annual maintenance of alternative septic systems.
- J. Coordinate environmental quality protection efforts with the establishment of public parks, natural recreation areas, and natural resource regeneration and preservation.
- K. Improve environmental quality on a site-by-site basis through the establishment of performance standards for environmentally sensitive areas.

- L. Educate Warren County residents about the implications of mankind's actions upon the natural environment.
- M. Preserve Warren County's natural beauty, while making natural features accessible to County residents.

## **Chapter 4: Growth Management and Land Use**

### **Section 1: Growth Management and Land Use**

Goal: To direct future development into an efficient and serviceable form that will preserve the County's predominately rural character.

Objectives:

- A. Direct County development to areas contiguous with Front Royal or rural villages that are served or will be served with adequate public facilities such as roads, sewer, and water.
- B. Limit future suburban sprawl in rural or agricultural areas where adequate public facilities do not exist or where their provision would not be cost-efficient.
- C. Develop incentives to preserve farmland, forested areas, open space, and rural character. Explore the use of the Chesapeake Bay Cost Share Program and other similar programs for the funding of open space preservation.
- D. Discourage growth in environmentally sensitive areas that have natural development constraints, such as wetlands, steep slopes, karst terrain, and flood plains.
- E. Discourage strip development along County roads and highways for both traffic safety and aesthetic reasons.
- F. Locate industrial and commercial development in defined areas.
- G. Require that developers pay a fair share of the associated costs for additional public facilities and services generated by the development. In addition, design and implement a proffer system that will ensure that adequate public facilities are in place or proposed before development is approved.
- H. Develop a preservation plan that identifies and protects historically significant areas, sites, and properties.
- I. Coordinate the County's and the Town of Front Royal's growth and management plans.

- J. Maintain the County's rural character.
- K. All future private access easements serving three or more residential dwelling units should be designed with a slope no greater than 15%.
- L. Develop land use policies and implement land use decisions in such a manner as to limit average residential growth to no more than 3% per year, measured in new residential building permits. Encourage developments to be phased in so as to not exceed the County's vision of maintaining a 3% annual growth rate.

## **Section 2: Environmental Aspects of Land Use in Warren County**

Goal I: Develop Warren County land in accordance with local, state, and federal standards that provide the best possible quality of life.

Objectives:

- A. Develop performance standards applicable to new development activity and the solution of old environmental land use problems.
- B. Protect fragile groundwater and surface water resources.
- C. Encourage and, where possible, enforce architectural and site design standards that blend with, and take advantage of, the natural environment. This should include the retention of natural drainage patterns where they reduce flooding and erosion and the maximum retention of wooded areas, views, and vistas.
- D. Encourage incentives to developers for incorporating greenways in their projects; thereby enhancing appearance, safety, and value.
- E. Identify and seek to retain significant views and vistas along the Skyline Drive and County roads.
- F. Encourage unnecessary reduction of tree cover and other natural vegetation while allowing for reasonable land use.
- G. Encourage tree planting along public roads to preserve rural character and value.
- H. Encourage cluster development through density incentives. Incentives should increase as developers use smaller percentages of the site for construction, leaving the remainder as park, greenway, or wooded areas.
- I. Develop performance standards for karst and other sensitive areas.
- J. Prevent dumping in sinkholes and provide incentives for cleaning up such areas.
- K. Maintain litter free public highways and other public areas.

Goal II: Develop and maintain a County GIS system containing the following: number, type, and location of housing units, essential fire and police protection, shops and other basic services, development density relative to known problem areas, location, area, condition, and use of agricultural and forest lands (public and private), soil and geologic characteristics by region, air quality by source and season, condition of rivers and streams, wildlife counts and habitats.

Objectives:

- A. Develop an environmental data base drawing on all federal, state, and local agencies, as well as public and private organizations serving Warren County. The data base should define time saving, technical, and economic advantages of the system's use.
- B. Create financial support for development and maintenance of the system among participating agencies and the state, with small user fees for other users.
- C. Provide a central point within County government for computer data storage, its evaluation, cross-reference, and accessibility to all contributors and users.
- D. Ensure timely data update by all concerned.

**Section 3: Housing and Community Development**

Goal: To provide, throughout the County, residential areas that offer a quality, low density residential development that does not drain County resources and protects rural character.

Objectives:

- A. Provide assistance to local organizations (non-profit and for-profit) to upgrade the existing housing stock that is deficient in plumbing or sanitation facilities.
- B. Discourage all types of residential building in areas that are environmentally sensitive. Develop land use and zoning regulations that are consistent with this purpose.
- C. Encourage current neighborhood stability by providing technical and support services where possible.

**Section 4: Rural Character and Agricultural Preservation**

Goal: Preserve the County's rural character by preserving open space, as well as agricultural and forest lands.

Objectives:

- A. Maintain land use classifications in the taxing of agricultural and forestal properties.
- B. Encourage cluster development in rural areas to preserve open space, to increase road safety, and to preserve rural character. The remaining land should be kept undeveloped. Increases in housing density within the cluster or other incentives should be considered in return for preserving open space.
- C. Develop buffer zones to reduce potential conflicts between cluster developments and non-compatible uses such as farming and large commercial or industrial development.
- D. Access to cluster developments should be limited to those necessary for safe ingress and egress of residents and emergency vehicles.
- E. Utilize natural topographic features and/or planting screens to shield development from public roads and adjoining properties, thereby preserving scenic vistas and rural character.
- F. Avoid significant modification of the existing terrain and prohibit development of environmentally sensitive areas, such as floodplains and steep slopes exceeding 10%. Require special permits for development for slopes over 15%.
- G. Modify subdivision provisions to allow only four lots per contiguous land areas under the same ownership, irrespective of the number of individual parcels. These four lot developments shall conform to cluster development guidelines.
- H. Develop provisions that will encourage the orderly growth of rural villages. These centers should retain their traditional village character as they develop into convenience/service centers for the surrounding rural area.
- I. Designate some of the most scenic roads in the County as Scenic Highways and Byways, thereby preserving scenic rural views and vistas. The State has designated Route 55 East as a Scenic Highway. Other possible candidates include: Route 340 South, Route 522 South, Browntown Road, Route 55 West, Morgan's Ford Road/Milldale Road, Rivermont Road, and Reliance Road.
- J. Provide strict controls to limit access along major highways, such as Routes 55, 340, and 522, to preserve roadway capacity, decrease congestion, and improve safety.
- K. Maintain the Highway Corridor Overlay District to address architectural and aesthetic controls as well as to insure special access and buffering requirements along the County's major entrances.

### **Section 5: Rural Villages**

Goal: Focus rural residential and light commercial growth in and around rural villages.

Objectives:

- A. Construct small sewage treatment facilities (and water systems where necessary) to serve the rural villages. Possible locations could include Bentonville and/or Limeton which could combine services with the Raymond R. “Andy” Guest, Jr. Shenandoah River State Park; and Browntown.
- B. Allow expansion of dual uses in the rural villages.
- C. Develop Village Center Land Use Plans, as components of the Comprehensive Plan, which will guide development within Village areas.

### **Section 6: Forest Land Management and Preservation**

Goal: To preserve the community’s rural character and preserve forest land, and other environmentally sensitive areas, by managing and maintaining forest resources during the development process.

Objectives:

- A. Adopt performance standards and a review process for the commercial and non-commercial forest cutting of any area exceeding one acre.
- B. Develop standards to protect ridgelines.
- C. Provide limited forest cutting in stream, wetland, and river areas.

### **Section 7: Public Lands**

Goal: Utilize public lands as a resource in maintaining the County’s rural character.

Objectives:

- A. Work with the National Park Service to ensure an equal partnership in the use and management of common resources and common concerns.
- B. Utilize Shenandoah National Park’s view-shed analysis to develop land use recommendations to ensure development compatible with the County’s rural character.

- C. Monitor State and Federal agencies development plans and work with those agencies to ensure activities consistent with the County's rural character.
- D. Maintain the Shenandoah River's scenic nature by minimizing development within the floodplain. Designate the river as a greenway for recreational and flood control purposes.

**Section 8: Commercial and Industrial**

Goal: Encourage orderly growth of commercial and industrial development relative to environmental and economic impacts along the Rt. 340/522 Corridor and at Rt. 55 East (Linden).

Objectives:

- A. Provide Rt. 340/522 and Rt. 55 East (Linden) with adequate services in place or planned for balanced future commercial and industrial development.
- B. Encourage the location of clean industry and commercial activities through the development of performance standards that ensure the activity would be compatible with the community's goals.
- C. Encourage industrial and commercial growth to achieve 20-25% of the tax base.
- D. Encourage industrial and commercial development that provides competitive wages and benefits.

**Section 9: Residential**

Goal: Provide residential areas that offer a variety of housing densities, types, sizes, costs, and locations to accommodate existing and future needs.

Objectives:

- A. Encourage all new subdivision development to be centered around existing village centers and to be developed as planned residential developments which create a neighborhood or community atmosphere and identity.
- B. Discourage residential development in areas of environmentally sensitive lands and agricultural operations.

**Section 10: Highway Corridor Plan**

Goal: To develop a highway corridor plan for Route 340/522 North, U.S. Route 55 East and West, Route 340 South, and Route 619.

Objective:

- A. Develop an overlay district to include landscaping regulations, protection of significant views and vistas, minimum architectural guidelines, and controlled access points along these roads.

## **Chapter 5 - Community Facilities**

### **Section 1: Historic Preservation**

Goal I: To mitigate the impact on historic structures and properties imposed by new development.

Goal II: To maintain the Warren County historical assets that preserve the County's character.

Objectives:

- A. Maintain an inventory of historical sites and structures. Seek state and federal funds to update this study.
- B. Request input from the Warren County Heritage Society on development proposals presented to the County Planning Commission.
- C. Preserve the heritage, contributions, and interests manifested by the Native American Cultures.
- D. Provide opportunities for County residents and visitors to interact with historic and cultural influences that would enhance their appreciation of these County life qualities.

### **Section 2: Parks and Recreation**

Goal I: To provide a variety of quality recreational opportunities in Warren County.

Goal II: Warren County must provide recreational facilities and programs in cooperation with the Warren County Public School System expansion plans.

Goal III: Expand recreation activities and sites to all areas of the County.

Objectives:

- A. Coordinate recreational facility development with the County Comprehensive Plan, thereby ensuring that facilities and residential development occur simultaneously.
- B. Plan community facilities with the capability of having multi-functional uses by two or more organizations (public or private). Recreational facilities must be included in new school construction planning.
- C. Coordinate facilities with schools planning where possible.
- D. Ensure that additional public recreational facility costs and recommended programs (due to new development) are equitably borne by those benefiting.
- E. Coordinate natural resource protection efforts with future County park, open space, and recreational land use opportunities.
- F. Provide adequate waterfront recreation access to County residents.
- G. Work with state to improve existing river access points.
- H. Provide adequate law enforcement at public river access points.
- I. Ensure that existing residents' needs are a first priority.
- J. Take advantage of what County-wide areas offer for park space and incorporate as time and funding permits.
- K. Coordinate a Parks and Recreation Plan Advisory Committee to assist with future development (similar to the Town of Front Royal's 1992 Where the Mountains meet the River Comprehensive Park Plan).
- L. Encourage private sector partnerships in the provision of recreation facilities and services to augment the County's basic facilities and services.
- M. Provide for the preservation of open and wooded space, and selected flood plain areas, as greenways.

### **Section 3: Schools**

Goal: Development of new school facilities and renovation of existing facilities for the Warren County Public School System which would be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.

Objectives:

- A. Develop, adapt, and maintain a 20-Year capital facilities plan.

- B. Review the performance and effectiveness of existing facilities and proceed with changes or expansion as necessary.
- C. Meet community educational service/facility needs as a priority.
- D. Ensure that additional school facilities' and services' costs resulting from new development are equitably borne by those benefiting.
- E. Coordinate and locate school facilities' expansion with the County Comprehensive Plan and with future development ensuring school accessibility to County residents.
- F. Coordinate athletic facilities with County Parks and Recreation plans where possible.

#### **Section 4: Fire and Rescue**

Goal: Provide responsive fire and rescue coverage for the entire community.

Objectives:

- A. To maintain the volunteer system of the individual departments, to preserve their autonomy while encouraging centralized coordination, communication, and supervision and to supplement with paid staff where justified.
- B. To define, evaluate, and make recommendations concerning adequate and appropriate level of fire and rescue protection and to evaluate and improve Warren County's existing fire and rescue services.
- C. To make additional evaluations and recommendations regarding fire and rescue services in Warren County and to implement these policies in a timely and cost-efficient manner.
- D. To continue implementation of countywide policies and procedures.
- E. Continue to implement plan for standardization of equipment.
- F. Continue to improve the level of training.

#### **Section 5: Police Protection**

Goal: To provide police protection for all areas of Warren County that is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and in a cost-efficient manner.

Objectives:

- A. Meet service needs of existing development as a first priority.
- B. Examine the potential of satellite offices where cost effective.
- C. Develop a central emergency dispatch system.
- D. Ensure that the costs of additional services are borne by those benefiting.
- E. Coordinate law enforcement activities with the Town of Front Royal.

### **Section 6: Library**

Goal I: To provide access to public library resources to all residents and areas of the County. Investigate expansion to better serve needs of the County by locating future facilities in areas that are consistent with the County residents' needs.

Goal II: Provide up-to-date technological equipment to meet current and future County residents' needs.

Objectives:

- A. Encourage and support the "Friends of Samuels Public Library" organization.
- B. Encourage the adaptive reuse/shared use of existing facilities in providing expanded service to County residents.
- C. Review the conditions and performance of existing facilities in planning new or expanded facilities and services.

### **Section 7: Waste Management**

Goal: Provide waste management services consistent with the residents' needs, in a cost-efficient manner, which would encourage development consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.

Objectives:

- A. Continue to maximize recycling efforts.
- B. Evaluate existing compactor sites for adequacy and replacement/expansion if necessary.
- C. Meet existing waste management service needs as a first priority.
- D. Coordinate service expansion with the County's Comprehensive Plan so that development and expansion of services coincide.

- E. Plan and cooperate with regional waste management solutions.

### **Section 8: Government Offices**

Goal I: Maintain existing, efficient equipment and facilities for County Government and residents.

Goal II: Provide residents with needed facility space in which to assemble and to participate in civic functions.

Objectives:

- A. Give priority to expanding existing facilities rather than to creating new facilities.
- B. Deliver necessary County services in a convenient, cost effective manner.
- C. Develop County facilities in locations that are actual or potential focal points for citizens' activities.

## **Chapter 6 - Economic Development**

Goal I: Maintain an effective business environment which fosters the growth and prosperity of existing industries.

Goal II: Maintain a commercial / industrial tax base of 20 – 25%, within boundaries of land as zoned.

Goal III: Develop a comprehensive plan to attract tourists.

Goal IV: Develop a coordinated program to target and attract business and industry to develop a diverse tax base.

Goal V: Provide an educational system to support industry.

Goal VI: Provide infrastructure to support industrial / commercial development.

Objectives:

- A. Continue to assist with regulatory requirements and help reduce business costs in order to increase profits and promote growth.
- B. Increase public awareness of the economic impact of buying locally and of the community's economic base.

- C. Increase the number of group tours and festivals in the community.
- D. Attract the individual leisure traveler.
- E. Attract Shenandoah National Park visitors.
- F. Work with the EDA and with existing businesses and industry to evaluate and improve economic development strategies.
- G. Provide business and industry with the infrastructure required for future development and expansion.
- H. Actively market the County's Industrial Parks.
- I. Support businesses that provide services and employment opportunities for local residents.
- J. Provide appropriately zoned land areas suitable for future industrial and commercial growth within areas defined on the future land use map.

## **Chapter 7 - Infrastructure**

### **Section 1: Water Service**

Goal: To develop and implement a method for water service which is cost-efficient to County residents and consistent with the County's Comprehensive Plan in terms of growth management and land use issues as described in Chapter Four.

Objectives:

- A. Meet existing community needs as a first priority.
- B. Encourage cooperation and shared facility use in conjunction with other entities or agencies.
- C. Coordinate development with facility expansion.
- D. Develop needed facilities in a cost-effective manner.

### **Section 2: Sanitary Sewer Service**

Goal: To develop a County Sanitary Sewer System which is cost-efficient and meets residents' needs while providing an equitable service level in the County. The Sanitary Sewer System also would protect our environment and provide for economic growth and development.

Objectives:

- A. Meet existing community needs as a first priority.
- B. Encourage cooperation and shared use of facilities in conjunction with other government entities or agencies.
- C. Coordinate development with facility expansion.
- D. Develop needed facilities in a cost-effective manner.

**Section 3: Stormwater Management**

Goal: To prevent Stormwater Runoff from site development through maintaining pre-development conditions.

Objectives:

- A. Evaluate potential of adopting local stormwater management ordinances.
- B. Reduce impact of increased runoff from new land development, thereby reducing potential flooding and flood damage.
- C. Minimize erosion potential from development or construction sites.
- D. Assure that existing and proposed culverts and bridges are adequate.
- E. Increase water recharge into the ground through using retention and detention ponds.
- F. Enhance Stormwater Runoff quality to prevent water quality degradation in receiving water bodies.
- G. Reduce stream bank erosion to maintain stream channels for their biological functions as well as for drainage.
- H. Prevent stream base flow reductions caused by new land development.
- I. Use on site and regional stormwater management techniques and methodologies.

**Section 4: Transportation**

Goal I: To provide for the safe and efficient movement of people and goods throughout the County.

Objectives:

- A. Plan roadway development to support and enhance the Comprehensive Plan and the Land Use Plan.
- B. Maintain and improve existing transportation facilities to meet increased demand.
- C. Examine the potential for protecting scenic beauty and improving safety without compromising safety on the following roads: Rt. 340 South and Rt. 55 West.
- D. Encourage and support State efforts to improve and expand the Inland Port's facilities.
- E. Require development to pay its fair share of the costs resulting from increased transportation facility demands.
- F. Develop a circulation system that encourages the separation of through traffic from local traffic.
- G. Require that new subdivisions having more than four lots be serviced by reverse frontage roads meeting State Department of Transportation standards.
- H. Encourage limited access management along County roads; discourage strip development; encourage reverse frontage lots for residential development.
- I. Preserve and enhance opportunities for greater industrial use of the County's rail facilities.
- J. Decrease the need for automobile trips by providing mixed use developments, pedestrian access, and bike paths.
- K. Apply for Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) funds to improve the existing transportation system and to provide alternative transportation modes such as biking and hiking trails.
- L. Provide technical assistance to property owners' associations wishing to establish sanitary districts to handle private road maintenance.

Goal II: To provide for the safe, efficient and orderly development of the Route 340/522 corridor from Interstate 66 to Route 661; while maintaining the carrying capacity of the highway.

Objectives:

- A. Develop a transportation model of the Route 340/522 corridor.
- B. Request that the Virginia Department of Transportation conduct a preliminary engineering study identifying specific improvements needed on this section of Route 340/522.
- C. Major commercial entrances and street intersections should be set back about 300 feet from the Route 340/522 travel lane to facilitate 200 foot turn lanes with transitions. Frontage Roads should be discouraged.
- D. Collector roads should be used to carry commercial and industrial traffic to safe stoplighted intersections, identified in the corridor plan, complete with left and right turn lanes in all directions. Direct entrance onto Route 340/522 should be discouraged but, when needed, the entrance should provide ingress and egress for multiple uses such as at property lines. Additional collector roads should be built to provide safe and convenient access to internal industrial parcels such as in the Kelley, Toray, Inland, Success and Stephens industrial parks.
- E. Provide a six lane roadway to handle the ultimate traffic build out of the corridor.
- F. Realign Route 658 to intersect Route 340/522 to match centerline of the intersection with Route 627. This will allow the use of the existing Crooked Run Bridge and allow direct access to high volume commercial uses east of Route 340/522.
- G. Relocate frontage roads at the Route 340/522 and Route 655 (Country Club Road) intersection.
- H. Close existing crossovers that do not meet the Virginia Department of Transportation's minimum safety and turn lane requirements.