

Introduction

Purpose

The Comprehensive Plan is the County's official policy guide for future development related decisions. The Plan is long-range in nature, and provides a picture of how the community wishes to develop over the next 15 to 20 years.

As a policy document, the Plan provides a framework for the County's residents and decision makers to conceptualize how the County should look and function. Within each chapter of the Plan, there are implementation strategies identified. All or some portion of the strategies may be implemented to accomplish the goals and objectives for any particular topic addressed in the Plan. The major purposes of the Comprehensive Plan are:

- Provide a guide for the numerous public and private decisions that will create the future County.
- Promote the interests of the community as a whole.
- Enhance, describe, and promote the County's physical environment.
- Develop a coordinated, well-planned system of public services.
- Evaluate short-term actions against long-term goals.
- Recognize the natural resources, historical, and architectural significance of Warren County and the surrounding area so that they can be more effectively preserved, protected, and integrated into an orderly pattern of development.
- Fulfill the legal requirement of Chapter 11, Title 15.1 of the Code of Virginia.

The overall goal of the comprehensive plan is to: **Maintain and enhance the quality and character of Warren County's natural and man-made environment by promoting the efficient use and conservation of the County's land and natural resources in order to effectively meet the social and economic needs of present and future citizens.**

Plan Organization

The Plan is broken down into several chapters which cover a broad range of topics. Many of the topics in any particular chapter may be tied into other topics or referenced in other chapters. The chapters cover the following topics: History, Growth Trends, Natural Resources/Environmental, Growth Management and Land Use, Community Facilities, Economic Development, Infrastructure, and Implementation. Each of these chapters have the following sections: Introduction, Background, Goals and Objectives, Implementation strategies, and a Summary. Additionally each chapter may be further divided into sections on selected topics.

Planning Process

The 1997 Comprehensive Plan process started in early 1994. The planning process was organized as a bottom-up or citizen driven process. Two community surveys were conducted. The results from the surveys were tabulated and analyzed. There were 34 citizens who volunteered to participate on the Citizen Advisory Committee. This committee subdivided into subcommittees, each with a separate topic to address. These subcommittees wrote the majority of this plan. County staff provided technical support as well as the staff of the Lord Fairfax Planning District Commission. A vast array of citizens, with varying backgrounds were involved in this planning effort. Additionally, many community groups and organizations were involved or offered comments as to the content to the Plan. This update of the 1997 Plan started in July 2002, with a citizen survey. The results from this survey were tabulated and analyzed. The Warren County Planning Commission met on a monthly basis to review each chapter and update the goals, objectives, and other information as necessary.

Maps Associated with the Comprehensive Plan

The maps associated with the Warren County Comprehensive Plan, are general in nature. These maps show the approximate areas of the features illustrated on the map(s). These maps should not be used to determine the exact areas associated with any particular item illustrated upon them.

Implementation

As mentioned in the beginning, in each chapter there are many implementation options identified. The adoption of this plan does not require that the County immediately proceed to implement each of the recommendations. In Chapter 8 there is an implementation schedule. This schedule prioritizes the suggested recommendations. However, since the County is an ever changing community, the schedule may be altered to meet the needs of the County during the planning period.

Past Comprehensive Planning Efforts

The Warren County Planning Commission was established in 1968. Adoption of the first Comprehensive Plan occurred in 1975. The Plan was updated in 1984, 1989, and 1997.

Warren County adopted its first zoning ordinance in 1973. Its first subdivision ordinance was adopted in 1981. Since initial adoptions of these development ordinances, there have been many subsequent amendments. The zoning ordinance was completely revised in 1992.

A full-time Planning-Zoning Administrator was first appointed for Warren County in 1984. In 1994, the Planning-Zoning Administrator position was split to form two full-time positions: Zoning Administrator and Planning Director. Separating these functions was necessary due to the increasing development of the County. The Planning and Zoning Department now has five employees and is under the County Administrator's direction. There is a separate Building Inspections Department. This department administers the Virginia State Uniform Building Code

and the County's Erosion and Sediment Control Ordinance. The Building Department has seven full-time employees and one part-time employee.