



Bath County, Virginia
Comprehensive Plan
2007-2012



Comprehensive Plan Bath County, Virginia

Board of Supervisors

Clifford A. Gilchrest, Chairman

Percy C. Nowlin, III, Vice-Chair

Stuart L. Hall

Richard B. Byrd

Jon R. Trees

Millboro District

Cedar Creek District

Williamsville District

Valley Springs District

Warm Springs District

County Administrator

Bonnie Johnson

County Planner

Miranda Redinger

Consultant

Marsh Witt / Greg Baka

Planning Commission

Mike Grist, Chairman

Lucille Swink

Lynn Ellen Black, Vice Chair

Ernestine Merchant

Mary Lynn Riner



Table of Contents

Overview

Introduction	1
History	4
Vision & Values	7
Visioning Workshops	10
Youth Perspectives	14
Perspectives on Agriculture	16

Community Development

Demographics	19
Housing	27
Economy	36
Government & Finance	39
Natural Environment	42
Community Services	
Public Utilities	45
Education	56
Transportation	62
Community Facilities	69
Public Safety & Social Services	71

Land Use Strategies

Land Use	76
Smart Growth Principles	93

INTRODUCTION

Legal Status and Purpose of the Plan

The General Assembly has determined that every municipality in the Commonwealth shall prepare a comprehensive plan and review it every five years. The requirements for and the procedure by which a Virginia municipality shall prepare such a plan are contained in Title 15.2 of the Code of Virginia:

The comprehensive plan shall be made with the purpose of guiding and accomplishing a coordinated, adjusted and harmonious development of the territory which will, in accordance with the present and probable future needs and resources best promote the health, safety, morals, order, convenience, prosperity and general welfare of the inhabitants.

The Code relates that the plan should be general in nature, and serve both as a guide to development as well as a survey of the locality's various assets and challenges. It should forecast and prepare the community for future changes, such as changes in population size, employment base, environmental quality, and the demand for public services and utilities. It should also identify local citizens' concerns, needs, and aspirations and use them to establish clear goals for the future. In addition, the plan should outline strategies or recommendations that can be used to accomplish such goals.

Official Capacity of the Plan

This 2007 Bath County Comprehensive Plan is an update to the

County's existing comprehensive plan, which was adopted in 1999. Upon adoption by the Board of Supervisors, this new Plan replaces and supersedes the 1999 document.

The Plan is not a law or ordinance. It is a guide for decision making and establishes policy guidelines for when, where, and how to provide public utilities, change zoning designations, and facilitate, coordinate, and regulate development.

Establishing the general location and timing of utility extensions is the only policy in the Plan that is implemented upon adoption of the Plan. Other policies are not implemented directly by the Plan, but should be implemented via future changes to the County's development regulations. Such policies would include changes to the provisions of the subdivision and zoning ordinances, and plans for capital improvements.

The Planning Process

Effective planning is a dynamic process, one that both considers and attempts to coordinate many local and regional variables at one time. It is best carried out by the people of the community. They must make choices, set goals, and choose the means by which to achieve them. Generally, in determining the destiny of a locality, the planning process can be characterized by three questions:

What do we have?

What do we want and why?

How do we get it?

The development of the Comprehensive Plan is a community-based effort, one that invites citizens to participate at numerous points along the way. The planning process used for the update of this Plan is summarized below:

- **Visioning Forum** – On May 5 and May 9, 2005, the Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission (CSPDC) conducted a “brainstorming” session for residents of Bath County to solicit opinions on the current status of Bath County. The session included a review of the County’s perceived strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats for both 2005 and the year 2025; a consideration of what the area may be like by the year 2025; strategic initiatives to ensure the area’s economic competitiveness; and strategies for carrying out the initiatives. Points of focus were on land use, preserving the environment, financing assistance, industrial infrastructure, business climate, workforce, and quality of life. Surveys asked participants not only what the greatest challenges might be over the next 20 years and how the County might implement Smart Growth Strategies to address these challenges.
- **Update and Expansion of Base Data** – The CSPDC staff updated relevant tables and figures from the 1999 Plan with the most current available data. Generally, the new data for Bath County is presented in a way that either compares it geographically to nearby counties, or historically by year. Many sections from the 1999 Plan were expanded significantly. The data was intended to be presented in such a way that the tables and graphs would paint a story and that there would be a need for less written text as is usually found in many Comprehensive Plans. However, it was determined that these graphic elements would comprise a separate, complimentary document,

and not be included directly in the body of the Plan.

- **Format Changes** – Each section was given a brief introduction page highlighting some of the key trends or changes in the statistics within that section. At the end of each section, the Goals and Objectives for that section are listed. Other format changes include the addition of sections devoted to Youth Perspectives and Perspectives on Agriculture (meetings held in April 2006). The Land Use Section was greatly expanded with an emphasis placed on recommendations for growth management. Also, a section was added indicating how certain Smart Growth Principles could be implemented that would help the County attain certain growth and development-related objectives.
- **Series of Community Meetings** – Interested citizens were requested to participate in a series of six (6) community meetings that addressed issues concerning ten (10) topics or sections of the 1999 Comprehensive Plan including: Demographics, Housing, Education, Community Facilities, Economy, Government and Finance, Transportation, Utilities, Natural Environment, and Land Use. Following a kick-off meeting with the County and their Consultant in November 2005, these regular meetings were started in December 2005 and ran thru April 2006; and in May 2006, the staff and Consultant also met with the School Board to further discuss educational issues. Special thanks go out to this “Comprehensive Plan Committee” – the citizen group largely responsible for the crafting of the goals and objectives found throughout this updated Plan.

- **First Draft of Comprehensive Plan --**
The updating of the Comprehensive Plan text was started in July, finished in August, and was ready for presentation in time for the Planning Commission's September meeting.
- **Public Hearing** – On October 23, 2006, the Bath County Planning Commission held a Public Hearing on the Comprehensive Plan. Some of the initial public feedback cited a need to separate the text and demographics into 2 different sections. Also, some of the language of the goals and objectives were modified. These tasks were subsequently accomplished.
- **Public Meeting** – On November 27, 2006, the Planning Commission held a follow-up Public Meeting to discuss the Comp Plan. The public feedback identified a need for additional sections of text – such as public safety, health care, and social services. Additionally, changes to the Public Utilities section and information that would propose limits on large-scale wind facilities were introduced. These additional sections were added to the Draft Plan in December and January. Graphics (several photographs) were added to complement the text of the Plan in February.
- **Second Draft of Comprehensive Plan** -- On February 20, 2007 the Planning Commission held a follow-up Public Hearing. After hearing several questions from the public concerning the general policies of the draft Comp Plan, the Planning Commission decided to set a public worksession devoted just to working out some differences in this "Comp Plan update" and clarifying some of the text. This session was held on March 15, 2007.
- **Recommendation of the Planning Commission** – Then, on April 12, 2007, following months of review, public comment, and editing, the Planning Commission voted to recommend approval of the Comprehensive Plan to the Board of Supervisors. The Plan will be introduced to the Board of Supervisors at their May meeting and a Public Hearing may be forthcoming at their June Board meeting.
- **Final Public Hearing and Adoption by Board of Supervisors**

HISTORY

On December 14, 1790, Bath County was created from parts of Augusta, Botetourt, and Greenbrier Counties. Much like its namesake, the English resort city of Bath, Bath County was to become a resort land of national reputation because of its mineral waters. With the formation of the State of West Virginia in the nineteenth century, Bath County became one of the western boundary counties of Virginia.

Early Settlement Patterns

In the early 1700's, western Virginia was very sparsely inhabited. In the lower valley of the South Branch there was a clan of Shawnees, about 150 in total, which was a significant population concentration at that time. For Native Americans, the Valley of Virginia represented a hunting ground. In order to attract deer, buffalo and elk, the Indians burned the grass at the end of each hunting season to keep the area in a condition of prairie. The bottom lands of the Jackson, Cowpasture and Bull Pasture river basins were utilized in this manner for much of the Indians' tenure in Bath County.

The European/American settlement of Bath County began during the 1700's. As was much of the inland mountainous region of the Middle Atlantic, Bath County was settled by members of dissenting Protestant sects escaping religious persecution. The earliest settlers in Bath County were Scotch-Irish Presbyterians from Ulster, Ireland. Among these first settlers was the family of John Lewis, the "father" of Bath County. First settling in the area north of Staunton, Lewis moved west into the Cowpasture area in the 1740's. The Lewis family was followed by other large landholders, some of

whose names are still used as place names – such as Jackson and Dickenson.

Between 1746 and 1750, settlers established large farms of several hundred acres. Subsequent surveys in 1750 and 1755, however, showed that few newly formed tracts numbered over one hundred acres. Many of these surveys were for already established landholders or their offspring. Historically, the major portion of the large tracts has been concentrated in the more fertile valleys of the Cowpasture and Jackson Rivers.

Early in the nineteenth century, Bath County was beginning to acquire, along with its permanent agricultural residents, a number of part-time residents who came to the numerous mineral springs in the County. As early as 1750, Thomas Walker, a physician, naturalist, and later guardian of Thomas Jefferson, recorded that he found six invalids using the waters at Hot Springs for medicinal purposes. In 1766, Cuthbert Bullit erected a hotel at Hot Springs; portions of it remained until 1901. Several years after the hotel construction, Bullit petitioned that fifty of his acres be laid off into lots and a town established. The actual drawing for lots took place in 1794, but the proposed town did not become a resort center until Dr. Thomas Goode purchased the old hotel in 1832. By 1835 there were bath houses, several rows of cabins, and a reputation for very good table fare.

In 1880, M. E. Ingalls, president of the Chesapeake and Ohio Railway, purchased the Warm, Hot, and Healing Springs. In 1890, he formed the Virginia Hot Springs Company, and named the existing hotel at Hot Springs, "The Homestead." The

company constructed a railroad spur of twenty-five miles to connect Hot Springs with the main line of the Chesapeake and Ohio at Covington. The company also made numerous improvements to the old hotel until fire destroyed it in 1901. The present Homestead was built soon after the fire and its tower was constructed in the late 1920's. During the early part of World War II, the Homestead served as an internment for Japanese officials from the Washington delegations and eastern consulates. Since construction of the Homestead, Hot Springs has been a major Bath County resort center.

Neighboring Warm Springs, however, was the better known resort in the nineteenth century. Warm Springs was already a nationally known summer gathering place for elite society from the South. Planters from the Gulf states, as well as other distant points, traveled by canal boat and stage coach to the mountain resort for the summer months. Many well-to-do Virginians also visited the "springs" for all or part of the warmer months to partake of not only the waters, but of the social life as well. Virginians from the Tidewater region, like the planters from the Deep South, came as much to escape the yellow fever and cholera epidemics of the lowlands as they did to bathe and socialize. Mountainous Bath County provided a safe, healthy environment for those wealthy enough to make the long journey for the summer social season. The white frame bath houses that still remain are visual reminders of Warm Spring's nineteenth century prominence. Other springs such as Healing Springs and Bath Alum attracted limited numbers of summer residents in the early nineteenth century, but Warm Springs remained the prime resort of the area for the rest of the century.

Bath County, like neighboring Highland County, has been a grazing region from its earliest days. The large river farms comprised nearly all of the tillable land in Bath County and gave the County a more

aristocratic social structure than most mountainous areas. Hunting, instead of farming, however, was the basis of livelihood for a number of early Bath County residents living in the areas least suited to farming. Hunters had access to plentiful game (especially buffalo, bear, and turkey). Skins sent to seaports, as well as the bounty from killing wolves, provided a reliable cash return for Bath County hunters.

The first dwellings in the County consisted of small log cabins with the roofs made of long riven shingles held down by weight poles. Later homes were made of hewn logs, and many were covered with frame siding. A few wealthy planters built high-style brick houses such as the Greek Revival house at Hidden Valley.

Because Bath County has attracted visitors since the early nineteenth century, it has escaped the isolation of many Appalachian counties. Through the years many families have built fine homes or rustic cottages to use as part-time dwellings. Historically, there have been three generalized groups of people in the County: a small number of farmers, tourists and second-home residents, and a laboring class that primarily provides services for tourists and part-time residents.

Historic Landmarks

Each of the periods of Bath's colorful history has left the County with a number of historic buildings and sites. If not identified and preserved, historic sites are often lost to posterity through deterioration and neglect.

Based on information obtained from the former Comprehensive Plan, as well as the Bath County Historical Society, Inc., 49 significant historical sites have been identified throughout the County. These sites are listed below. To date, seven Bath County sites have been designated as both State and National Historic Landmarks. These are Warinickton Hidden Valley Farm,

Gristmill Inn Springs, Warm Springs Bath Houses and Pools, Homestead Hotel, Homestead Dairy, Sitlington House, and the Old Millboro School. The County acknowledges the important role historical landmarks play in benefiting the area's culture, economy, and tourism industry and encourages local preservation initiatives. Refer to **Tools for Preserving Bath County's Rural and Historic Character** in the Land Use chapter of this Plan.

Bath County Historic Landmarks

* Included on the Virginia Landmarks Register and the National Register of Historic Places

- 1) Back Creek Bridge
- 2) Gatewood House
- 3) Lake Moomaw
- 4) Cameron Clerk's Office
- 5) Folly Farm
- 6) Bacova Church
- 7) Bacova Houses
- 8) Bacova Post Office
- 9) Mayse House
- 10) Warinickton Hidden Valley Farm*
- 11) Bath Courthouse & Sheriff's Office
- 12) Bath County Historical Office
- 13) Gristmill Inn Springs*
- 14) Anderson Cottage
- 15) The Chimneys
- 16) Tannery and Shields House
- 17) Christ Episcopal Church
- 18) Warm Springs Presbyterian Church
- 19) Warm Springs Inn
- 20) Warm Springs Bath Houses & Pools*
- 21) Oakley Farm
- 22) Boxwood Farm
- 23) Gramercy Farm
- 24) Maple Ridge
- 25) The Homestead Hotel*
- 26) St. Luke's Episcopal Church
- 27) Shrine of the Sacred Heart
- 28) Virginia Hotel
- 29) Homestead Dairy*
- 30) Malvern Hall
- 31) Healing Springs Hotel
- 32) Mustoe House
- 33) Virginia Hotel Bolar
- 34) Bath Alum House & Barn
- 35) Mclung House & Store
- 36) Williamsville Presbyterian Church
- 37) Green Valley
- 38) River Uplands
- 39) Big Bend Farm
- 40) Windy Cove Presbyterian Church
- 41) Windy Cove Farm
- 42) Fort Lewis
- 43) Sitlington House*
- 44) Nimrod Hall
- 45) Camp Mont Shenandoah
- 46) Millboro Springs Girls College
- 47) Old Millboro School*
- 48) Rock Rest
- 49) Wilderness Farm

VISION AND VALUES

In order to plan effectively, it is essential that Bath County not only learn from past mistakes, but also take inventory of where it is today, versus where it would like to be in the future.

Bath County: Where We Are Today

We see today that we reside in a beautiful, peaceful County that is well known for its popular tourist attractions and natural environment. We see an area rich in history that has evolved as the region has prospered. In addition to tourism opportunities, we see Bath County as a focal point for many diverse cultural and recreational activities, as well. We take pride in our small-town friendliness and our strong sense of community. We are pleased with the overall quality of our local government and the services it provides at relatively low costs.

Like most communities, we also see that we are in need of improvements. We want to ensure the continuation of quality education for our children, and are concerned about maintaining and paying for high quality education. Maintaining a healthy supply of local jobs is important to us so that our young people can remain in Bath County if they desire. We are also concerned about the number of families living below the poverty level. We see the need for more childcare and elderly care provisions within the County. We see the need to diversify our employment base, while maintaining tourism as an important economic sector. We see that unmanaged growth can degrade our natural environment and rural character, but that a lack of growth

can mean a loss of economic opportunity and stagnation. It is important that we achieve and maintain balance in our economic and land use strategies. We see a great deal of energy in our County, and take pride in Bath as it exists today, as well as in what we want it to become.

Bath County: Where Tomorrow Will Lead

According to community discussion, four interrelated themes make up the “key success factors” for Bath’s future. For some residents, one issue may stand out above the others. For some, this issue may be employment. For others, the overriding issue is the continued protection of the environment and the rural areas. For some, education is the basic foundation for being able to achieve everything else. It is this diversity of priorities that makes us a vital community. Regardless of our individual priorities, however, four themes evolved from public discussions. They include:

- Land use/environmental balance
- Economic opportunity
- Social well being
- Educational quality

Our challenge is to integrate and balance these themes so as to maintain a cohesive whole in our County. Although the purpose of this Comprehensive Plan is to focus on our immediate community, we acknowledge the importance of “thinking regionally” when planning for the above. The following provides a more in depth discussion of the four visioning themes.

LAND USE/ENVIRONMENTAL BALANCE

Well-planned, balanced development is what we seek for Bath County. We visualize strong, centralized cores (Hot Springs, Warm Springs, and perhaps other planned growth areas) that act as magnets within the County. Future development will grow out gradually from these cores. By centralizing growth, surrounding rural areas can be left to remain predominantly green and open for farming, recreation, and conservation and will also allow us to retain the “small-town” atmosphere we now enjoy. We want any future growth to strengthen our existing communities and neighborhoods, rather than compete with what already exists. Growing within the limits of our resources is essential as we seek to balance development with the natural environment. Our valuable water resources, in particular, must be conserved and protected. Air quality, too, is essential to maintaining the health and beauty of our County. Beauty and aesthetics, including preservation of our historic character and conservation of our natural resources are vital to us. We want Bath County to remain attractive and distinctive, and by protecting the County’s high quality of life, we expect to continue to attract visitors and new residents.

Strategic Questions

In judging how effectively we are planning for our future, we will ask ourselves the following: Are we . . .

- protecting our historical and cultural heritage?
- strengthening our existing core areas?
- building on established areas?
- planning for potential future growth?
- protecting the rural areas and open space?
- maintaining a human scale?

- encouraging new growth to complement existing development?
- protecting our natural resources?
- improving the aesthetics and beauty of our community?
- maintaining those qualities that make us attractive to residents and visitors?
- working within the larger region?

ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

The condition of the overall economy determines the availability of jobs, the size of the tax base, and the means by which individuals, families, businesses, and public institutions are able to afford the type of community we envision. Diversified economic growth will provide the County with more stable jobs, better salaries, and more opportunity for our children to stay in the area to work. A diversified economy will contain a significant portion of community based and locally owned businesses, including technology, agriculture, and arts and crafts. It will also keep the County well positioned for advances in technology.

Strategic Questions

In judging how effectively we are planning for our future, we will ask ourselves the following: Are we . . .

- maintaining steady low unemployment?
- providing a mix of job opportunities for people of various skills/educational levels?
- maintaining a strong tax base?
- retaining and supporting existing businesses?
- encouraging new locally-owned, small business/industries?
- capitalizing on tourism and local involvement with the Virginia Western Highlands Travel Council?

- supporting traditional agricultural business?
- supporting the economic role of artisans and craftspeople?
- targeting those types of business/industry which can contribute the most to the area?
- participating in regional economic and job development/training approaches?
- Utilizing local funding adequately and efficiently?

SOCIAL WELL BEING

Since the residents of Bath County form the foundation of our society, providing them with the best possible quality of life is important. We want to maintain the high quality of social services currently available in Bath, and assist needy individuals in obtaining relief against poverty. We will continue to participate in funding assistance programs that allow residents access to available, affordable housing. We want to provide our children with suitable daycare opportunities and our elderly residents with appropriate options for living out their lives in Bath County. In addition, we understand the importance of maintaining planned, age-appropriate activities that meet the social and recreational needs of our residents.

Strategic Questions

In judging how effectively we are planning for our future, we will ask ourselves the following: Are we . . .

- increasing the number of households able to rise out of poverty?
- narrowing the gap between the least well off and the most well off households?
- increasing the supply of affordable housing?
- providing appropriate social/recreational programs for the general public?
- addressing the needs of special populations?

- supporting cultural and recreational opportunities for all?

EDUCATIONAL QUALITY

Quality education has been a strength in our County and we seek to continue that. We want to maintain overall quality while addressing the needs of different types of students – those going on to college and those going directly to jobs; the pre-schooler, the adult learner and the career changer; those who find learning to be difficult and those who need to be challenged. Keeping our public schools matched with our community’s needs, and providing adequate funding for education are challenges now and will be in the future, as well. The majority of our local government budget will continue to go into education, so we must be certain that local educational programs continue to provide the County with significant returns, and are supportive of the economic and social elements of the County.

Strategic Questions

In judging how effectively we are planning for our future, we will ask ourselves the following: Are we . . .

- challenging all learners to their highest potential?
- addressing the needs of both the college-bound and the job-bound student?
- addressing pre-school as well as adult learner needs?
- providing specialized services for those who need them?
- fully utilizing school facilities?
- linking public education at all levels with community needs (parents, employers, community groups)?
- continuing to pursue more educational funding assistance from the State?

VISIONING WORKSHOPS

On May 5th and 9, 2005 Visioning workshops were held with the assistance of the staff and the CSPDC to solicit input from the public to hear what issues in the community were on the minds of those people who participated in the workshops. To summarize that public comment, the key responses, particularly those that had recurring themes, are listed below.

Following the completion of the workshops, the Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee went over the results of the Visioning workshops again with assistance from the CSPDC. They were asked to take these issues into consideration as they prepared the Goals, Recommendations, and Strategies. The results were used as background data the Committee used as foundational material for their recommendations.

A key purpose of some exercises typically used in visioning workshops is to engage participants to approach discussion of local issues from a perspective of how change will affect the community over the long run. The Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee reviewed and gave consideration to all comments made at the introductory visioning workshops; and hence, many of these issues were incorporated into the Plan's Goals and Recommendations.

Community Values

When asked what people *valued most today* about Bath County, several of the top responses included (in descending order):

- rural quality of life
- school system
- community support
- people
- nature
- wildlife, and
- good neighbors who care.

Bath County was seen as a *special place* because of the following factors:

- quality of life
- peaceful
- wide open spaces
- healthy air
- low crime rate
- no huge "superstores"
- very few housing developments
- beautiful Homestead resort
- privately owned businesses, and
- hunting.

Strengths & Weaknesses

Some of the County's greatest *strengths* were typified by:

- recreation
- knowing your neighbors
- environmental conservation
- relatively untouched landscape
- low crime
- wildlife
- the Garth Newel Music Fair
- no stoplights
- outstanding history
- the rural setting
- fresh water, and
- camping and fishing.

Participants identified some of the County's *weaknesses* as follows:

- not enough residential planning
- lack of strong employment
- no long-range land use plan
- lack of affordable housing
- passive citizen involvement
- blighted areas
- lack of available healthcare
- lack of public utilities
- loss of tax revenue due to extensive publicly owned land
- the high cost of property, and
- having five phone systems in the County.

Opportunities & Threats

Some of the key *future opportunities* cited by participants were:

- special events
- cottage industries
- building trades and trade schools
- targeted tourism
- use of technology
- entrepreneurs/small business
- promoting recreation
- the Homestead Preserve development, and
- investigating niche agriculture.

However, the greatest threats were perceived as:

- unrestricted growth and development
- lack of planning and failure to follow Comprehensive Plan
- the loss of scenic beauty
- increase in taxes
- franchise businesses
- lack of affordable land and housing
- increase in crime
- impact upon our quality of life
- options for the elderly to remain local
- increased traffic, and
- inability to retain our young people

Visioning the future of Bath

Participants were asked to envision what Bath County would look like *in 20 years*. Responses included:

- heaven on earth
- abundant forests and wildlife
- clean water
- small population increase
- vital agriculture
- privacy is a reality
- model vocational school, and
- still no stoplights.

Development would occur in thriving small villages. Safety, health and welfare of citizens are a top priority. The County has a model historical preservation district. Craftsmen/tradesmen are in demand outside of the County. Mom & Pop businesses still thrive. Strip malls do not overrun the County. We have improved health care and effective social services. Clustered development is encouraged and green space is preserved.

The future *economy* of Bath County respects beauty, outdoor recreation (hunting and fishing), and consists of a non-invasive tourism (day/cottage renters and Homestead visitors etc., not large bus groups). Our economy helps to recruit teachers, expands local farming jobs, creates high-tech manufacturing jobs for the next generation, and sees an overall increase in income through a strong and more diversified job base. Family farms remain protected and alternative energy sources are explored.

Well-known *accomplishments* in Bath County 20 years from now would include:

- better infrastructure and utilities (additional water, sewer, internet, and road improvements)
- strong comprehensive zoning plan
- preservation of farmland
- more conservation easements
- increased job opportunities
- next generation retention

- affordable housing availability
- carefully-managed development
- diversified employment
- tax relief for people who need it
- good hospital/healthcare, and
- small private businesses that are not overrun by franchises.

The Character of our Villages

Twenty years from now, our villages will be typified by the following individual *characteristics* and differences noted between these unique communities:

Hot Springs - Retail

- Residential

Bacova

- Remain residential
- Selective growth around existing area
- Expand small manufacturing and light industrial

Mitchelltown

- Commercial
- High density residential

Millboro

- Industrial park
- Railroad access
- Small, clean industry tied to area
- Tourism
- Biotechnology

Burnsville/Williamsville

- Rural, residential farms
- Forests
- Additional recreational facilities

Warm Springs

- No major changes cited
- Remains seat of government

At the conclusion of these visioning sessions, participants were asked to place colored stickers by the short and long-term issues that were of primary concern to them. The following is a summary of these votes:

Long-Term: avoiding sprawl/development and preservation of balanced growth (22), controlling growth (12), planned development (11), follow Comprehensive Plan (11), affordable housing (7), Bath County Airport investment (3), education (2), strong diversified economy (2), protect rural character (1), education (1), agricultural preservation (1), promoting environmental economic opportunities (1), job creation (1), invest in infrastructure (1), school budget (1). The items that did not receive any votes were affordable healthcare, team building, technology, increase size of high school, emergency services/law enforcement, retirement home for elderly, specialized agriculture products/markets.

Short-Term: finalize Comprehensive Plan and look at Land Use Regulations (19), stop further development (16), write a responsible Comprehensive Plan (12), stop housing development (9), support privately owned businesses over chains (3), parking

deck in Hot Springs (2), seeking out and drawing in businesses for citizen amenities and employment (2), providing extended water and sewer services (2), specify limits to growth (1), affordable housing (1), set the real estate tax rate (1), freeze development until the Comprehensive Plan is in place (1), Individual attention to natives (1), address affordability (1), larger lots in non-growth areas (1), housing and programs for seniors (1), increase availability of health care (1), understand effects of change (1). The items that did not receive any votes were Cedar Creek and Millboro Springs water and sewer, elect officials that will support citizen agenda, expand job opportunities, traffic in Hot Springs, encourage/support things that already work well here, no stoplights/strip malls, and maintaining open fields/lands along corridors.

From these tallies, it becomes clear that the major concerns for the future vitality of the County center around constraining and controlling development through thorough Land Use Regulations and careful planning.

YOUTH PERSPECTIVES

In April 2006, the County staff and the County's Consultant met with students from four different Civics classes at Bath County High School to discuss their views, get their opinions on the future of the County, and their perspectives on whether they see themselves as part of Bath County's future.

Often Comprehensive Plans can be written in a vacuum that does not take into account the views of our young people who will be tomorrow's leaders and taxpayers. Participants included classes with seniors just weeks away from their own commencement and freshmen just underway with their high school experience. This section is a summary of the responses given by students.

Bath County Today

Students were asked the things they like the most about Bath County. The positive aspects included: leaves, nature, wildlife, quiet, safety, no streetlights, nighttime stars, hunting & fishing, small town feel, not a large number of homes, not many subdivision lots, mountains, lack of violence, and a sense of community.

Students listed the following items as the things they didn't like about Bath County: lack of jobs, activities, competition, and restaurants, having to travel far to get to amenities, traffic generated by tourists, gossip, and boredom.

Participants were then asked what they would like to see changed and the responses were varied, but centered around increasing the number of recreational, social, and employment opportunities for

young people, and on broadening access to technology, diversity, and health care.

The Outdoors

Despite some criticism, students were also positive about the quantity and quality of recreation activities here. Many enjoy hunting and fishing, hiking in the mountains, and the great outdoors.

Overall, students thought that the County does a good job of protecting the environment. They referred to the size of the national forests and park lands that are protected. Students wanted to see that both the natural scenery and the small-town feel were preserved and maintained. Most areas are generally clean and should continue to be maintained.

The Economy

Students indicated that most of the local businesses are youth-friendly. Many were especially appreciative for snowboarding at The Homestead. But, many of them reflected that there really aren't many places for a young person to go, echoed by "There's just not much to do here."

Most seniors had part-time jobs. About $\frac{3}{4}$ of the students who had part-time jobs worked at The Homestead, which pays a fairly standard hourly wage. Many students voiced concern about not having the jobs they desire to keep them here.

Education

Perceptions were very favorable when students were asked if the school system is doing a good job at teaching and equipping them for future career opportunities. Many felt that most teachers care very much about teaching the students and come to class well-prepared.

Overall, most respondents said there are enough electives and classes for vocational trades available. The Vo-tech class was cited as a good program, but also was cited for not having a lot of variety to offer. However, it was pointed out that many classes suffer from too low of enrollment or get cancelled.

Career fields that seniors will enter included the following: cosmetology, criminal justice, electrical, engineering, psychology, agriculture, landscaping, botany, zoology, veterinary, biology, law, and nursing

Requests for additional electives and programs included local welding, Advanced Placement classes, business management, graphic arts, music, drama, engine repair, and a track.

The Future

Many students expressed a desire to continue to live in Bath County as they become adults, but a few said they don't want to come back. The general consensus was that they would like to see it remain a small, safe community, with more activities and better education. Some said staying here could depend on the ability to get a high-paying or desirable job.

Housing

One of the most significant concerns of the students was their apprehension

about a lack of affordability. Most thought they would not be able to buy a home in the County – citing recent land speculation and sales as driving up prices, making it less affordable one day for them to own their own home – if it wasn't a family home or family land. Many thought they would have to rent an apartment or maybe a house. Some said they would live in a trailer, due to affordability. Many weren't sure how to assess the issue right now with just a part-time job and given their age-bracket. Some were upset that people rarely use their (second) homes here and that they often sit idle for most of the year.

Having a greater number of housing options available (i.e. – some smaller houses or apartments) would interest many of the younger people and make them more likely to want to stay in Bath County. However, nearly everyone had concerns that they did not want to live too close to their neighbors, and privacy could be at stake.

When a “cluster housing” scenario was presented to them, some liked the larger lot scenarios better. However, when further discussion revealed that density can actually preserve open space, the conversations shifted to preserving viewsheds and tree retention, as opposed to concerns about smaller lot sizes.

Traffic Lights

This subject provoked probably the strongest reactions. Many students did not want to see the first stoplight come into the County. Some thought if public safety warrants a stoplight, then one should go in, if absolutely necessary. Mathews County and Bath County were cited as two of the only counties known in Virginia without a stoplight. Most students just wanted to keep it that way.

PERSPECTIVES ON AGRICULTURE

In April 2006, the County staff and the County's Consultant met with landowners of large agricultural properties and other citizens interested in the preservation of agriculture and/or large acreage land parcels.

Landowners were asked for their perspectives on the current status of farming in Bath County and what they see for the future of farming in the County. Participants were also asked to share their views about obstacles or impediments to successful local farming operations along with their preferences about future residential growth scenarios.

The staff distributed notices to the community and received local press coverage (i.e. – newspaper and radio) to help promote the community meeting that focused on agricultural concerns. A wide variety of landowners were represented with longtime County residents and newcomers alike, exchanging their opinions and knowledge of land issues affecting the local community.

Present Issues

Landowners identified some of the biggest issues they face as enduring a low Return-on-Investment (ROI) -- maybe 1 -2% per year in some types of farming; higher costs of farming in recent years (including more expensive fertilizer, tractors, bailers, diesel (fuel oil), and fencing (steel)).

While concerns about a low ROI were common, it didn't appear to add to the pressure for large acreage landowners to sell their land (at least in Bath County).

Agriculture as a Livelihood

Very few large landowners rely on farming for their livelihood due in part to a concern that there is no local manual labor workforce available, an essential component of growing crops for cultivation.

Most respondents indicated that the sale/growth of local produce would be desirable if they could locate buyers for the products. A big demand by local chefs exists for high quality salad greens at restaurants. Additionally, new demographic trends in the County may lead to an increased demand for a farmers market. One big drawback is the local climate. Bath County has a very short growing season.

Various alternative types of agriculture could be exploited to enhance the viability of local farmers and possibly increase their numbers. Organic beef, which has an increased demand, especially among younger consumers, is a possibility, but the potential drawbacks include a higher mortality rate because these cows don't receive antibiotics.

The topography and terrain in the County lend itself well to growing grapes for use as a vineyard. However, the sometimes troublesome soil conditions and cooler climate could be drawbacks.

Another obstacle to increasing the production of agricultural acreage in Bath County is the lack of adequate grass feed that farmers have to finish adult cattle. Farmers here can raise young cattle, but have to send them off to finishing lots thereby cutting into their revenue potential. This is because local cattle often need to be

sold at ~850 lbs., not 1200 lbs (which is a more optimal weight to seek market prices). This problem is somewhat alleviated, but not totally remedied by utilizing animal rotation (akin to crop rotation) in their fields.

Many landowners realized to be profitable we have to produce a value-added product. For example, in order to finish cows in Bath County, we would need to efficiently grow grain here.

Marketing our County Farms

There are a number of ways that Bath County could become a specialty food destination.

Many people prefer organic foods that are high-quality and in high demand. The “Slowfood Society” promotes food grown naturally (i.e. - slowly). Participants also identified a high demand for goat meat; but the key drawback is that goats are very difficult to raise and keep. Growing ostrich eggs for commercial sale was even suggested.

Education about the benefits and growing methods of organic foods was seen as a key need. Virginia Tech extension agents are an excellent community resource that should be called upon. The college also has a state wine expert who could visit here and evaluate the local potential. Also, quantifying the marketability of products in a “Field-to-Table” program would be helpful. An obstacle to growing crops is dealing with the costs, maintenance, and labor of providing adequate fencing to keep deer and other animals out.

Here in Bath County, the Homestead Preserve has recently established a trust fund for local grants to re-invest in the community. In order to help our local farmers with the productivity of their own lands, the County or individuals could seek grants to help with growing organic foods.

Growing produce is very labor-intensive. But, fuel crops, such as growing grains for biodiesel or ethanol, can be investigated further.

In addition, a group of local cattle farmers in Bath and Highland Counties have banded together to form a co-op to sell their own beef.

Property Values

Landowners are feeling the pressure that rural land preservation is threatened by higher taxes. While Bath County has previously considered adopting Agricultural/Forestral Districts (AFD’s), there is concern that AFD preservation will consequently lead to the increase of taxes on all other lands. Assessments went up an average of 48% in the County during the past year. Some landowners said recent sales at very high dollar amounts were to blame and the assessments became skewed.

Respondents felt that the County should identify the biggest problems first and address them. To accomplish this, it was suggested that the potential revenue loss (in total dollars) if Agricultural/Forestral Districts were instituted should be identified.

In recent years, increased assessments have resulted in added pressure on local farmers already dealing with a low return-on-investment. Land Use Taxation offers some relief for the situation, but local farmers are still faced with a difficult cycle to manage. The cycle goes something like this:

Recent (higher priced) land sales → Increased Assessments → Difficulty in Paying Taxes → Increased Pressure to Sell the Land → More Farmland Being Cut-Up → Less Rural Preservation

The key issue facing Bath County and the preservation of its farmland is how can some of the land be developed in the County in such a way our current citizens can still afford to live here? How the land develops is critical to the survival of the farmlands and the endurance of the farming industry. If the changes in adjoining land values to existing productive farms don't price people out of their own homes/farms, then that is a good first step. But furthermore, as the County plans for new utility areas and growth areas, we need to be mindful not to spoil our scenic viewsheds.

Future Growth Scenario

The County currently gets about 50 building permits for new homes per year. In order to aid farming efforts in the County in the future, the vast majority of these 50 houses should be focused in and around certain areas planned for growth and/or higher densities rather than promoting

random growth in the more outlying areas of the County. Areas planned for slightly higher densities might be at or near an intersection of two roads, at a village or adjacent to other subdivisions and/or areas with existing or planned public utilities.

When the County guides the majority of new subdivision growth as stated above, we are effectively planning for areas planned for higher densities and near other conveniences or public uses, resulting in an efficient form of growth.

This is a preferable alternative to the haphazard scenario where 50 houses/lots would be located in scattered subdivisions randomly located throughout the County, resulting in no one area experiencing well-planned, compact growth, and a larger number of properties facing growth pressures from adjacent parcels of land and their increased land values.



Demographics

DEMOGRAPHICS

An understanding of past, present, and future demographic trends provides the essential framework for community planning. Familiarity with such trends helps us plan for future land use needs, as well as for public services and facilities. The following demographic review will help guide our policy-making decisions for community issues such as the following: Will there be increased need for more residential zoning in the near future? How many children can we anticipate will enroll in our schools? Will there be more demand for active or passive recreational activities?

General Population

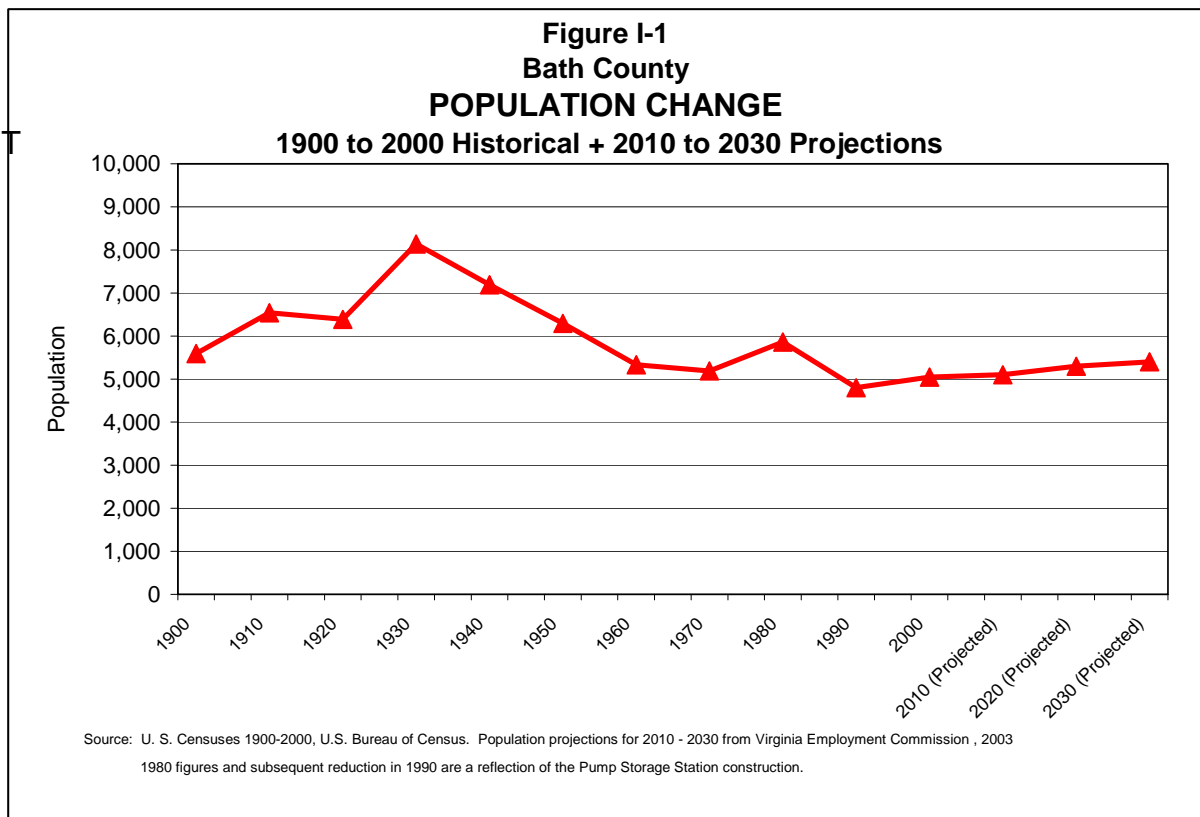
Historical Trends - Having a peak population of 8,137 people in 1930, Bath County experienced the majority of its 20th century growth during the 1920s. With the onset of the Great Depression, however, the County steadily lost population for four decades. The 1980 Census reported a trend reversal, however, in which population increased by 12.87 percent to 5,860. This increase was due, in large part, to the construction of Virginia Power's Pumped Storage Station. As the project neared completion, population decreased again in the mid-1980s. According to annual population estimates, produced by the University of Virginia's Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service, Bath County experienced a minor population increase of 2.10 percent between 1990 and 1997. Since these estimates are based on data such as local tax returns and school

enrollment, the current trend (indicative of a slight population increase in the 1990s) will need to be verified in the 2000 Census.

Population Projections – According to the latest projection publication, released by the Virginia Employment Commission in 1993, Bath County's population is actually anticipated to decrease to 4,501 by the year 2000. Such a decrease would represent a 9.98 percent decline from the 1993 estimate used in the projection study. Projections for the years 2005 and 2010 depict decreases of 10.00 percent and 10.04 percent, respectively (from the 1993 estimate). Because the 1993 projection model used by the Employment Commission is somewhat dated, projections should be interpreted conservatively.

Table I-1 Bath County POPULATION CHANGE 1900 to 2000 & 2010 - 2030 Projections			
YEAR	POPULATION	NUMBER CHANGE	PERCENT CHANGE
1900	5,595	-	-
1910	6,538	943	16.85%
1920	6,389	-149	-2.28%
1930	8,137	1,748	27.36%
1940	7,191	-946	-11.63%
1950	6,296	-895	-12.45%
1960	5,335	-961	-15.26%
1970	5,192	-143	-2.68%
1980	5,860	668	12.87%
1990	4,799	-1,061	-18.11%
2000	5,048	249	5.19%
Projected			
2010	5,100	52	1.03%
2020	5,300	200	3.92%
2030	5,400	100	1.89%

Source: U. S. Census 1900-2000, U.S. Bureau of Census.
Population Projections - Virginia Employment Commission, 2003



H

These projections indicate relatively significant amounts of decline in Bath's future population, more so than in surrounding counties and the State. It should be noted, however, that projected figures have varying degrees of reliability and are used merely to provide insight as to what could happen to population numbers in the absence of any major demographic shifts. Fluctuating trends in economic and living conditions can significantly affect future population growth patterns, as can local planning and policy activities. To a significant degree, population growth can either be encouraged or discouraged by local governments.

Migration Factors

Aside from annexation, there are two ways in which a community can maintain population growth. One is by maintaining a higher number of births than deaths (natural increase), and the other is by having new residents move in from elsewhere (migration). From 1990 to 1995, Bath

County appeared to be making most of its population gains as a result of migration.

Generally, when population increases are primarily the result of migration one or more "push-pull" factors are at work. These may include family, job availability, housing affordability, educational opportunities, or cultural/recreational outlets.

**Table I-4
Various Counties
POPULATION DENSITY
1990* - 2000**

COUNTY	YEAR	POPULATION	AREA IN SQUARE MILES**	PERSONS PER SQUARE MILE
Bath County	1990	4,799	531.9	9.0
	2000	5,048	532.0	9.5
Highland County	1990	2,635	415.9	6.3
	2000	2,536	416.0	6.1
Alleghany County	1990	13,176	445.9	29.5
	2000	12,926	445.0	29.0
Craig County	1990	4,372	330.1	13.2
	2000	5,091	331.0	15.4
Giles County	1990	16,366	357.9	45.7
	2000	16,657	357.0	46.7

Source: U.S. Census, 1990 - 2000.

* 1990 population reflects final counts and differ from orig. counts published in 1990 Census publications.

**2000 data was rounded by the U.S. Census Bureau.

Population Distribution

Among counties, Bath has the third smallest population in Virginia. The County's small population, coupled with a relatively large land area, results in a very low population density. With the exception of Highland County, Bath had the lowest population density (9.0 persons per square mile) among surrounding counties. Average population density for the State was more than 17 times that of Bath County at the beginning of the decade.

**Figure I-2
Population Density
Bath and Neighboring Counties**

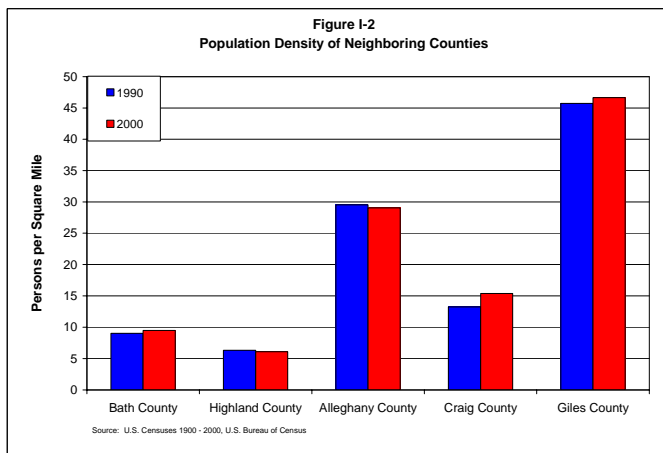
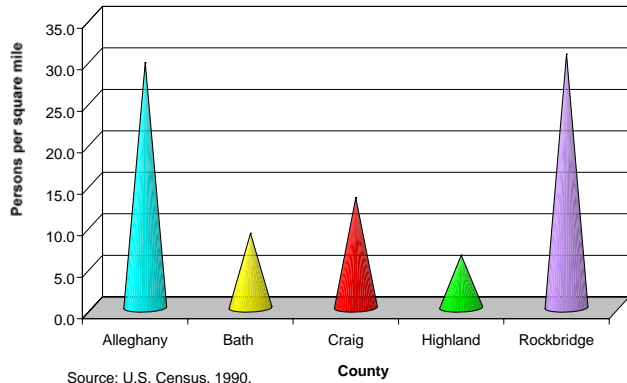


Figure I-2 displays Bath County's population breakdown, as well as population density, by Census block groups. As illustrated, population distribution is greatest in block groups which correspond to the Warm Springs Valley area, Mountain Grove, and the area surrounding Millboro. The number of people residing in these three block groups represents approximately 60 percent of Bath's total population. Population *density*, however, is greatest in

the block group with the smallest size (barely more than 22 square miles).

Population Characteristics

Age - Age is an essential tool of community analysis because so many of an individual's needs and behaviors are life-cycle related. Bath's median age increased significantly from 33.1 in 1980 to 39.3 in 1990, while the State median age increased from only 31.0 to 32.6.

Trends in Bath County's age distribution represent a relatively mature age structure that is continuing to grow. While Bath County's overall population decreased by 18.1 percent between 1980 and 1990, the number of persons aged 45 to 54 years increased by 16.10 percent

Between 1980 and 1990, Bath experienced a 23.80 percent decline in the number of children under the age of five. Additionally, Bath saw notable decreases in the number of individuals of child-bearing age. Regardless of the reason for decline, the total number of young children in Bath can be anticipated to decrease over the next few years. Such decreases may ultimately impact school class size well into the twenty-first century. However, School Board projections for the near future indicate stable enrollment figures.

The preceding trends are likely the result of an in-migration of retirees, the increasing life span of all residents, and the out-migration of young adults.

**Table I-5
Bath County
AGE GROUP CHARACTERISTICS AND CHANGE
1980 to 2000**

Age Group	1980		1990		2000	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Under 5	340	5.8%	259	5.4%	222	4.4%
5 to 20	1,429	24.4%	961	20.0%	927	18.4%
21 to 24	412	7.0%	259	5.4%	190	3.8%
25 to 44	1,699	29.0%	1,322	27.5%	1,426	28.2%
45 to 54	577	9.8%	670	14.0%	754	14.9%
55 to 59	326	5.6%	299	6.2%	353	7.0%
60 to 64	284	4.8%	283	5.9%	332	6.6%
65 to 74	437	7.5%	422	8.8%	515	10.2%
75 to 84	292	5.0%	266	5.5%	250	5.0%
85+	64	1.1%	58	1.2%	79	1.6%
Total	5,860	100.0%	4,799	100.0%	5,048	100.0%

Source: U.S. Censuses 1980-1990-2000, U.S. Bureau of Census

**Table I-5a
Bath County
AGE GROUP CHARACTERISTICS--Percent Change
1980 to 2000**

Age Group	CHANGE 1980-1990		CHANGE 1990-2000		CHANGE 1980-2000	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Under 5	-81	-23.8%	-37	-14.3%	-118	-34.7%
5 to 20	-468	-32.8%	-34	-3.5%	-502	-35.1%
21 to 24	-153	-37.1%	-69	-26.6%	-222	-53.9%
25 to 44	-377	-22.2%	104	7.9%	-273	-16.1%
45 to 54	93	16.1%	84	12.5%	177	30.7%
55 to 59	-27	-8.3%	54	18.1%	27	8.3%
60 to 64	-1	-0.4%	49	17.3%	48	16.9%
65 to 74	-15	-3.4%	93	22.0%	78	17.8%
75 to 84	-26	-8.9%	-16	-6.0%	-42	-14.4%
85+	-6	-9.4%	21	36.2%	15	23.4%
Total	-1,061	-18.1%	249	5.2%	-812	-13.9%

Race - Bath County's minority population is small, and appears to be shrinking at a rate significantly above the overall population. In 1980, Bath was home to 561 minority persons, or 9.6 percent of the total population. Of the 561 non-whites, African-Americans accounted for 98.6 percent of the total, while a small mix of other minorities comprised the remainder. By 1990, Bath County's total minority population had decreased by 52.6 percent to 266 individuals. Of the 266 non-whites, African-Americans accounted for 94.4 percent of the total. Asian or Pacific Islanders embodied 3 percent, while other minorities comprised the remaining small percentage.

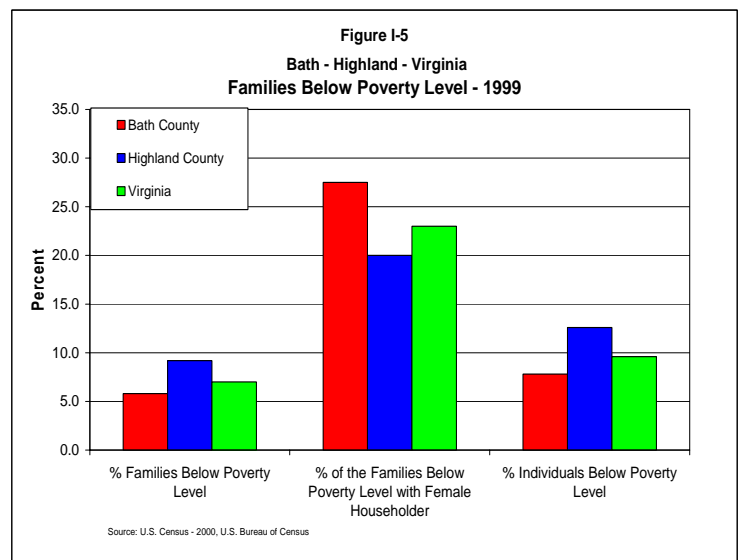
Households - Bath's total population decreased 18.1 percent from 1980 to 1990, although the total number of households decreased by only 2.37 percent. Generally, this trend is a result of fewer persons per household. In keeping with the national trend toward smaller families, household size in Bath has declined steadily, from 3.9 persons in 1970 to 2.81 in 1980, and 2.51 in 1990.

Among the five counties analyzed in this review, Bath and Highland experienced the greatest relative decline in married-couple families from 1980 to 1990 (6.38 percent and 12.32 percent, respectively). Interestingly, Bath was the only county in which the number of female-headed households decreased (by 33.48 percent); it was also the county in which the greatest increase in male householders occurred (49 in 1980 to 80 in 1990). This trend may be attributed to an influx of males employed by the Virginia Power Pump Storage Station in the early 1980s; therefore, it is difficult to draw specific conclusions from the data.

Poverty - Comparisons among different household types in Bath County reveal some potential disparities in how sex and age relate to income levels. According to the 1990 Census, of the female-headed households with children under the age of 18, 46.9 percent were living below the

poverty level. No male-headed households, with children of the same age, were recorded as living beneath the poverty level. Although the number of female-headed households decreased from 1980 to 1990, further analysis may be necessary to determine why Bath has so many low-income single mothers with children under age 18.

Poverty among elderly residents is often an issue of concern within many localities. In Bath, 24.9 percent of all householders over age 65 were living below the poverty level. Of all married householders aged 65 and over, 17.6 percent were living in poverty, and, significantly, 81.8 percent of all female householders aged 65 and over were living below the poverty level. The Census reported there were no male householders over age 65 living in poverty in 1990.



While Bath County had one of the lowest-ranking percentages of poor people in 1993 among neighboring counties and the State, it had the greatest proportion of poor children aged 5-17 (16.8 percent). Craig County had the lowest with 12.2 percent. All five counties compared in Table I-8a had median household incomes well beneath the State figure. It should be noted, however, that Virginia's median is somewhat skewed by wealthy counties in northern and eastern parts of the State. Thus, Bath's median income is generally in line with its neighbors.

Table I-8a
Bath - Highland - Virginia
MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME (Nominal in Dollars)

Locality	1979	1989	Change 79-89	Percent Change 79-89	1999	Change 89-99	Percent Change 89-99	Change 79-99	Percent Change 79-99
Bath County	\$13,618	24,203	\$10,585	77.7	35,013	\$10,810	44.7	\$21,395	157.1
Highland County	\$13,900	20,903	\$7,003	50.4	29,732	\$8,829	42.2	\$15,832	113.9
Virginia	\$17,475	\$33,328	\$15,853	90.7	\$46,677	\$13,349	40.1	\$29,202	167.1

Source: U.S. Census 1980, 1990, and 2000, U.S. Bureau of Census

Table I-7
Highland - Bath - Virginia
Income Below Poverty Level in 1999

	Total Population	Total Families	# Families Below Poverty Level	% Families Below Poverty Level	# Families Below Poverty Level with Female Householder	% of the Families Below Poverty Level with Female Householder	# Individuals Below Poverty Level	% Individuals Below Poverty Level
Bath County	5,048	1,452	84	5.8	44	27.5	387	7.8
Highland County	2,536	764	70	9.2	16	20.0	318	12.6
Virginia	7,078,515	1,847,796	129,890	7.0	71,397	23.0	656,641	9.6

Source: U.S. Census - 2000, U.S. Bureau of Census

DEMOGRAPHICS GOALS

1. Encourage young adults to stay in Bath County and seek to attract young families with children.
2. Support services for low-to-moderate income residents so that they may lead fulfilling lives and be effective participants in the community.
3. Reduce the number of families living below the poverty level.
4. Plan for the future diversity of the population including suitable services, education, employment, and housing opportunities.

OBJECTIVES

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none">a. Encourage and expand vocational and work-study programs in the public school system to strengthen the skills of young people and make them more marketable as local employees.b. Support age-appropriate activities and programs to meet the social and recreational needs of local children and adults.c. Continue to encourage the establishment of child care centers and early childhood education by private organizations.d. Support opportunities for the elderly to participate in recreation programs through private and County funded organizations. | <ol style="list-style-type: none">e. Support foster care programs for the elderly, allowing them to live in family situations.f. Work with housing authorities and local partners to provide assistance for upgraded housing for low-to-moderate income (LMI) residents and to create new home-ownership and rental opportunities for those making close to the Area Median Income.g. Continue to support the construction and operation of assisted-living homes and/or retirement communities for Bath's elderly within the County. |
|---|---|



Housing

HOUSING

Ensuring citizens the availability of affordable quality housing is a worthy goal for all localities. Such assurance reflects a community's ability to respond to the needs of its citizens, as well as to accommodate growth and economic development. Local governments can be influential in shaping the housing delivery system. Public policies can be designed and implemented to ensure that local housing goals are met.

In the year 2000, Bath County had 2,896 housing units, an increase of 11.6% from 1990. Owner-occupied housing accounts for 56.6% of the total units (up slightly from 1990) while 14.3% of the units were renter-occupied and 29.1% of the housing units were considered "vacancy units" – either vacant or a second home.

The large number of "vacant units" was further illustrated by the 23.6% of all homes were considered to be "seasonal, recreational, or occasional" housing. The number of homes in this category jumped nearly 42% from 1990 to 2000.

Single-family units made up 87.2% of the total housing stock while multi-family units (which actually decreased in number from 1990 to 2000) consisted of 3.8%, and mobile homes had 9.0% of the total units.

From 1993 to 2003, 462 new housing units were permitted. With the local market absorbing an

average of 46 new housing units per year, it becomes a challenging question for the County to answer as to how we can best plan for the impact that these, and potentially more new homes, will bring to the community. No multi-family homes were built during that same ten-year span.

About 2/3 of the housing stock was built prior to 1980. Bath County has its share of older homes as 28.1% of the total housing stock (as of 2000) was built prior to 1940. As for newer construction, 33% of the homes in Bath County were built after 1980 compared to 40% throughout Virginia.

The median value of owner-occupied housing rose to \$83,921 in 2003 dollars up sharply by 37.4% from 1990 (after adjusted for inflation). This figure compared somewhat closely to Highland County's \$88,133, but both counties trailed the statewide median value of \$132,042.

Likewise, the median contract rent in Bath County also rose sharply by nearly the same percentage increase as home values (38.1% after adjusted for inflation) up to \$386 per month. Highland County was slightly lower at \$357 per month, whereas the statewide average was at \$684.

In Bath County, 87.8% of the homeowners were spending less than 30% of their total household income on housing. Regionally and

statewide, people were spending higher percentages of their income on housing – as just 80.1% and 79% of homeowners in Highland County and statewide respectively were using less than 30% of their income on housing.

Affordable Housing

Having an adequate supply of affordable housing in Bath County, and the proximity of jobs and housing, are key principles of Smart Growth and are worthy goals for the County to pursue to improve the lives of all our citizens.

On one hand, increasing home values in Bath County are desirable, but it also means that affordable housing becomes more scarce for our teachers, nurses, firefighters, police officers, carpenters, hotel and retail workers, waitresses, and others. This situation is forcing these wage earners to look elsewhere to meet their housing needs, separating them from their workplaces in Bath County and increasing their transportation costs and gasoline usage at a time when gas prices have risen.

Furthermore, some “affordable housing” in the form of older housing stock can easily deteriorate from lack of maintenance investment, prompting the need for potential costly remodeling or even reconstruction of these older homes.

Housing affordability problems are not limited to Bath County alone. As home values continue to increase, more attention has been given to this issue both statewide and nationally. Rather, these problems are regional

in nature and warrant that all localities in our region work together for equitable solutions, so that Bath County is not bearing the entire burden for the rest of the region.

Defining Affordable Housing

In 2003 the Virginia General Assembly passed HB 2406 requiring localities, as part of their comprehensive plans, to designate areas and implement measures for the construction, rehabilitation and maintenance of affordable housing that is sufficient to meet the current and future needs of residents of all levels of income in the locality.

So many people may ask, “just what is affordable housing?” While the answer will vary, depending on an individual’s or family’s ability to pay, the Task Force looked to established definitions as a basis for its work. Section 15.2-2201 of the Code of Virginia states the following:

“Affordable housing” means, as a guideline, housing that is affordable to households with incomes at or below the area median income, provided that the occupant pays not more than 30% of his gross income for gross housing costs, including utilities.

Based on the statistics presented on the previous page, in 2000, 87.8% of Bath County’s population has access to housing that is affordable to their income bracket, because they are spending less than 30% of their salaries on housing

costs. However, Bath County suffers from a lack of housing which is “affordable” to those making within 80-120% of the area median income, which means a yearly salary between \$28,000-\$42,000. If this segment of the population is priced out of the market, community vitality will suffer.

Regardless of established definitions of housing affordability, what is considered affordable to an individual or family depends on their circumstances. In general, whether a house or other dwelling is affordable hinges on the following “affordability variables”. Note: household size and total income determine income status, whereas housing costs determine affordability.

1. Family/household size
2. Total income
3. Selling or rental price of dwelling

While workforce housing is cited as a concern, the County should also be mindful of the following needs across the spectrum:

- Housing for “our public servants”
- Active senior housing
- Housing for those on fixed or retirement incomes
- Assisted living facilities and long-term care facilities
- Fair and accessible housing for disadvantaged populations
- Homeownership & rental housing

Workforce Housing

Many factors influence housing construction costs. The following factors contribute to higher construction costs and can impede efforts to provide affordable housing, particularly to the local workforce.

- Rising land costs
- Land availability
- Lack of high density zoning
- Lack of mixed use zoning
- Design standards
- Lack of local incentives
- Public perception of “affordable housing” -- NIMBY

A long-term vision for affordable housing should emphasize an assurance that all housing needs are being met for people at all income levels. However, a high priority for the short-term should be to promote the development of an adequate supply of local housing for wage earners, often referred to as “**workforce housing**,” which should consist of both homeownership and rental housing choices.

Doing so will enable people who work in Bath County and are already vested in the community to have more viable options to live in Bath County. These endeavors would assist the housing needs for our all of our employees, and could aid in their retention.

Supporting Workforce Housing

After establishing workforce housing as the priority housing need to be addressed in Bath County, the

following endeavors should be explored:

Strategy #1: Increase the supply of homes, which sell in the price range of \$100,000. This would be attractive particularly for first-time homebuyers, young persons just out of college starting their careers, public service employees, and active seniors who are looking to downsize. Such housing choices should include both new construction and rehabilitation of existing, deteriorated homes.

Strategy #2: Increase the supply of housing that is affordable to moderate-income households and inclusive of both homeownership and rental opportunities. This is housing that is affordable to those with incomes between 80% to 120% of area median income, so that no more than 30% of household income is spent on housing costs, including basic utilities.

Strategy #3: Create an equitable distribution of workforce housing throughout the County to avoid concentration. Wherever possible, workforce Dwelling Units should be built in both new and in existing neighborhoods and can be distributed evenly between and throughout the village cores and the rural areas of the County.

Strategy #4: Ensure that all workforce housing, both new construction and renovation of older housing, is of high-quality design and compatible with surrounding housing, for long-term sustainability and minimal future maintenance.

Strategy #5: Enhance effectiveness of existing housing assistance programs through local funding.

Strategy #6: Develop partnerships with non-governmental organizations to help implement the workforce housing strategies.

Strategy #7: Stress in the public forum that our affordable housing initiative focuses on building or rehabilitating housing that is affordable to those whose continued service is vital to Bath's future vitality.

Implementing Housing Strategies

The County could look at the following as means to implement these recommended strategies that support workforce housing:

Rezoning land to establish new zoning districts, mixed-use zoning districts, and add more uses and higher densities in existing zoning districts -- which will encourage the collocation of jobs and housing, such as the use of Village Centers.

Rezoning additional lands for more zoning for commercial and industrial uses, thereby providing the potential for more employment opportunities to County residents.

Adopting a new Affordable Dwelling Unit (ADU) Ordinance as part of the new update to the Land Use Regulations to

help our workforce afford to live here.

Adopting and implementing a Village Initiatives Plan which could provide opportunities for new housing and rehabilitation of existing housing within certain Village Centers.

Administrative or permitting fees may be reduced or even waived and permitting can be expedited as a means to support affordable housing.

More specifically, an **Affordable Dwelling Unit (ADU) Ordinance** can be a primary tool for realizing the construction of affordable dwelling units with certain new development applications, providing regulations for and developer incentives to promote the construction of affordable dwelling units as part of new residential development projects. Such an ordinance is enabled by the authority set forth in Section 15.2-2305 of the Code of Virginia, and may follow the text verbatim.

For purposes of example, another locality in Virginia has adopted certain specifics in their ADU ordinance that prescribe:

A rezoning may be approved with an increase in the developable density by no more than 20%, if the applicants consents to a **voluntary and enforceable condition** in which at least 12.5% of the units are set aside as Affordable Dwelling Units (and density increases of no more

than 10% are allowed if at least 6.25% of the units are set aside in a multi-family project application).

In this example, if fifty (50) new housing units are planned and 12.5% of the fifty (50) units are set aside as Affordable Dwelling Units, then the Board of Supervisors could grant a density bonus of ten (10) additional units. In this scenario, the applicant must also agree to an enforceable phasing schedule, whereby market rate units must be built and occupied concurrent with a certain percentage of the affordable units, ensuring that both get built.

One final note, approving new subdivisions with low densities can increase housing costs because of the costs associated with providing infrastructure. If the permitted density through zoning is increased, more housing units can typically be built at a lower cost, because the development costs get spread across a greater number of units. A “cluster zoning” or pattern of development can help make this type of development pattern attractive in a rural community due to its decreased road costs and increasing the chances to mix in some affordable dwelling units. Consequently, providing ADU’s will help to increase access to affordable housing for all of our public service workers.

Housing Services

Bath County is the recipient of numerous housing programs designed to ensure citizens have access to adequate, affordable housing. Several organizations work together towards meeting the housing needs of low-income households. A prominent example of such funding collaboration in Bath County is the West Warm Springs Community Improvement Project. The three-year project, completed in December

1996, was responsible for rehabilitating 28 houses, demolishing over 20 vacant or dilapidated structures, and connecting 49 households to public sewer and 16 to public water. In addition, 16 households received indoor plumbing for the first time and one individual became a first-time homeowner.

The following is a partial listing of housing providers serving low- and moderate-income individuals and families in Bath County:

Virginia Mountain Housing – provides low-interest, deferred, and forgivable loans for the installation or improvement of indoor plumbing to owners of substandard housing.
930 Cambria St. NE Christiansburg, VA 24073 (540) 382-2002

Virginia Housing Development Authority – through the Single-Family Regional Loan Fund, assists low-income households in purchasing their first home. The program offers low-interest loans with down payment and closing cost assistance, making monthly mortgage payments more affordable.
601 S. Belvidere St. Richmond, VA 23219 (804) 371-7100
(The Waynesboro Redevelopment and Housing Authority currently services Bath County and may be contacted at *1700 New Hope Rd Waynesboro, VA 22980 (540) 946-9230.*)

Rural Development (formerly Farmer's Home Administration) – offers low-interest loans to very low- and low-income people in rural areas who are lacking adequate housing and unable to obtain loans from private lenders at reasonable rates. Loans may be used to purchase, build, improve, repair, or rehabilitate rural homes and to provide sufficient water and waste disposal systems.
30 East Preston St. Lexington, VA 24450 (540) 248-0246

Total Action Against Poverty (TAP) – provides a variety of programs addressing the needs of low-income individuals, including emergency housing repairs and weatherization.
P.O. Box 2868 Roanoke, VA 24001 (540) 774-7408

Southeast Rural Community Assistance Project (formerly Virginia Water Project) – encourages the development of water and wastewater systems to serve low-income, rural residents at affordable costs.
145 W. Campbell Ave. Roanoke, VA 24001 (540) 345-1184

SHARE Homeless Intervention Program – seeks to prevent the displacement of individuals and families from their homes as a result of eviction or foreclosure, and assists the homeless in securing permanent housing. The program also provides a training and educational component to ensure self-sufficiency.

Waynesboro Redevelopment and Housing Authority 1700 New Hope Rd. Waynesboro, VA 22980 (540) 946-9230

Alleghany Highlands Housing Alliance – strives to alleviate substandard housing conditions in Bath County, via Emergency Home Repair Funds, Indoor Plumbing and Rehabilitation Funds, and the Homeownership Assistance Program.

403 Ridgeway St. Clifton Forge, VA 24422 (540) 862-0263

HOUSING GOALS

1. Maximize the opportunity for a diverse range of housing to serve the varying needs of Bath County's present and future populations.
2. Support residential growth in designated areas and promote suitable infrastructure to support these communities.
3. Ensure that the County's natural beauty, environmental quality, and rural character are not sacrificed when planning for future housing opportunities.
4. Limit residential expansion in designated rural areas that are not appropriate for development or in areas where there are environmental concerns such as limited water or karst topography.

OBJECTIVES

- a. Be responsive to the housing needs of the County's growing elderly population and allow attached or accessory units for elderly parents.
- b. Increase the availability of rental housing; promote the development of mixed use residential with a range of affordability.
- c. Promote the development of affordable, starter, and workforce housing within the County.
- d. Institute a policy to ensure that developers, and not taxpayers, pay for the costs and impacts of development within the County.
- e. Allocate proper and suitable areas for desirable low, medium, and high-density residential development through zoning and through management of public services and infrastructure.
- f. Allow for village centers/mixed use development in designated growth areas.



Economy

ECONOMY

The ability of any community to sustain itself is largely dependent upon its economic assets. Such assets must be understood and cultivated for any community to flourish economically. Bath County therefore faces the challenge of capitalizing on economic opportunities without sacrificing the unique character and beauty for which the County has become so well-known.

The median household income in the County in 2007 is \$35,437, for one person, and \$50,625 for a family of four. While the household income on average countywide has risen nearly 24% (after adjusted for inflation) over the past 20 years, it still lags behind the statewide average by 25%. Overall, Bath County is outpacing neighboring Highland County with a slightly higher Adjusted Gross Income and Income Per Capita over the past 10 years.

While only 7.9% of the people in Bath County were living under the poverty level (below the state average of 9.6%), a relatively large 27.5% of the families below the poverty level had a female head-of-household.

The total civilian labor force in the county fell nearly 10% from 1993 to 2003 as the labor force jumped over 11% statewide. Unemployment dropped significantly from 9.2% to 5.3% during that same 10-year span.

The local economy was fueled by a sizable 23.5% of the workforce being employed in the "industry" category of "Arts, Entertainment, Recreation, Accommodation, and Food Services" far outpacing the state and regional norms.

"Education, Health, and Social Services" was the sector with the second highest percent employment (15.5%) while Construction was third (11.7%).

The "Service" sector as a whole comprises a whopping 58% of Bath County's workforce filling needed jobs in the hotel/motel, restaurant, and tourism industries. The "Information" sector of the economy lags as the lowest sector accounting for less than 1% of the total jobs, however, it offers the highest average wages.

Wages in Bath County in all sectors of the economy increased a modest 10.4% (after adjusting for inflation) from 1993 to 2004, only half as fast as wages increased in neighboring Highland County (21.7%) over the same time period with both counties trailing the state average of 25.4%.

Though it makes up just 7% of the County's economy, one category where the wages in Bath County exceed the state average (by 16%) is the "Transportation, Communications, and Utilities" sector.

The County logged about \$72,246,000 in taxable sales in 2003 up a strong 27.5% from 1993 with the highest increases logged in hotel/motel revenues.

The total number of farms in the County fell from 135 to 124 over the 15 years from 1987 to 2002. However, the total number of acres farmed stayed relatively the same, decreasing less than 1% over that time frame. Over 95% of the agricultural products sold from Bath County farms in 2002 were livestock and poultry with less than 5% accounting for crop sales.

ECONOMY GOALS

1. Strive to retain existing businesses and industry and help them to succeed.
2. Attract new businesses, while ensuring that growth and industrial development occur in suitable locations and are compatible with Bath's environmental, scenic, and rural character.
3. Build relationships that will create an enabling environment to provide opportunities for the County's labor force, as well as build local revenue.
4. Strengthen the promotion of tourism in Bath County.
5. Revitalize the farming community in Bath County.
6. Encourage the growth of small locally-owned private businesses as opposed to a large-scale "one-size fits all" approach to new business services.

OBJECTIVES

- a. Diversify the economy by working with appropriate parties that have expressed an interest in locating here, and pursue new businesses that would fit in with the existing environment.
- b. Pursue a partnership program to enhance potential relationships between the schools and local businesses.
- c. Attract environmentally low-impact, high wage industries, such as those in the areas of technology, home-based or telecommuting businesses, and business incubators.
- d. Create an inventory of existing buildings and encourage new development to take place in existing vacant buildings, rather than constructing new ones.
- e. Provide skilled and vocational training in the High School and encourage our local businesses to employ these skilled laborers.
- f. Work with local/regional partnerships for developing a strong Business Retention and Expansion Program.
- g. Continue to strengthen Bath County's working relationship with agencies such as the Virginia Economic Development Partnership and the Economic Development Association.
- h. Support an overall campaign for the community to attract tourism dollars to the County.
- i. Increase the number of telecommuters as a livelihood.
- j. Facilitate small-scale farming to support the economy of the County and establish a local farmers market to allow for sale of these products.



Government & Finance

GOVERNMENT STRUCTURE & FINANCE

The role of government is continually changing and should be responsive to the needs of all its citizens. In order for Bath County to best meet the needs of its residents, local obligations must be prioritized and reflected in a strategic plan of governance and funding.

The citizens of Bath County elect a 5-member Board of Supervisors to four-year terms who adopt the annual budget, set policy and direction for the County, and appoint a County Administrator.

The primary local revenue sources for the County are property and other taxes comprising 63% of all local revenues. Public Service Corporation taxes, service charges, certain fees, fines, grants, and other miscellaneous sources account for the additional local revenues.

Expenditures generally consist of 3 categories: the general fund (for all general operations), special revenue funds (earmarked for a certain purpose such as education), and capital project funds (used for acquisition or construction of major capital facilities).

The County's total Maintenance, Operations, and Capital expenditures were \$14,821,582 in FY2007/2008 up 6.4% from FY1999. Education expenditures account for 40% of County expenditures.

For example, elementary, secondary, and other instruction comprises 73.4% of the

\$9,701,518 proposed to be spent on Education in FY2007. Operations and Maintenance increased by 1.8%, School Food increased by 1.9%, and Transportation Services increased by 2.2% in a budget that is proposed to be low in growth for FY2007/2008.

Bath County significantly decreased its total outstanding debt from \$1,924,825 in FY02 to \$514,650 in FY06 – which results in a low \$104.00 of net bonded debt per person. This number will increase in future years as the \$8.74 million for renovations to Bath County High School are assumed.

Local revenues collected from the categories of "Permits, Fees, & Licenses" and "Fines and Forfeitures" are well below the state per capita average.

In the past few years, while direct federal aid and local revenues have increased, funds from the state have decreased 1% as the school population has declined.

GOVERNMENT AND FINANCE GOALS

1. Provide the best possible government service to all residents of Bath County.
2. Strive to Increase the County's financial resources.

OBJECTIVES

- a. Continue to use the Capital Improvements Plan and the recommendations of the Planning Commission as a basis for allocating funding for capital projects.
- b. Pursue the benefits of consolidating similar local services, such as those existing in both the school system and the local government.
- c. Aggressively pursue alternative funding sources (i.e. – grants) to provide new revenue streams for capital improvements.
- d. Continue to maintain an adequate fund balance.
- e. Develop a long-term plan that promotes the common interests between businesses and the County.
- f. Fund, provide, and strive to retain adequate staffing levels to meet the growing needs of the County.



Natural Environment

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

Nestled in the lush Alleghany Mountains, Bath County is a scenic playground known all over the world. Because of its reputation, the preservation and protection of the County's unique natural resources has become a long-term goal of local citizens who understand the economic potential in preserving our ecological and geographical amenities.

While the County is obligated by state and federal regulations to protect attributes such as air and water quality, and unique habitats, the ultimate responsibility of achieving a healthy balance between economic and environmental interests rests squarely on the shoulders of our citizens.

The purpose of the following information is to identify critical natural resources in the County and recommend strategies for sustaining these resources as the County continues to develop.

Bath County is characterized by a humid temperate climate with relatively moist winters and warm summers.

The overall topography of the County consists of high, narrow mountain ridges, often with steep slopes, alternating with relatively narrow river valleys.

Many areas of the County have slopes that exceed 25% -- these areas are generally unsuitable for both cultivation and development. When combined with conservation practices, these lands may be used for outdoor recreation, wildlife management, watershed protection, and forest purposes.

Bath County's geology consists of sedimentary rocks and is characterized by alternating valleys and ridges stretching from the northeast to the southwest. The mountains are generally capped by hard resistant sandstone, while the valleys have soft shale and soluble limestone.

The County contains abundant supplies of impure limestone which can be used as road material and agricultural lime, hydraulic lime, explosives, and natural cement. High calcium limestone, also found in the County, is used for fertilizer, dye, glass, lime, mineral feeds, paper, and Portland cement. Clay material found has been suitable for brick, tile, and pottery.

Much of Bath County and the surrounding areas sit on areas of carbonate rock such as limestone or dolomite where there may be little or no surface drainage. These areas of karst topography often contain many underground caves or a network of caves. Development on karst sinkholes should be avoided.

The two largest rivers in the County, the Jackson and the Cowpasture, converge to form the upper reaches of the James River watershed. Many of the tributaries and the rivers in Bath County are characterized by floodplains. Development in the floodplains should also be avoided.

The County's timber industry rose to \$381,823 in 2000 with a nearly 100% hardwood harvest. While timbering is not a dominant industry in Bath County, forest management is essential to protecting watersheds, wildlife, and outdoor recreation.

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT GOALS

1. Preserve and protect air quality in Bath County and the vicinity.
2. Reduce potential environmental problems associated with Karst topography.

3. Conserve the County's soil resources and protect prime soils.
4. Protect local water resources and unique aquatic habitats.
5. Minimize flood-related damage to structures, personal property, and public facilities.

OBJECTIVES

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Seek the establishment of clean industries that do not produce harmful emissions. b. Support regional efforts to reduce automobile use through programs such as Rideshare. c. Consider geologic concentrations in areas before designating land uses. d. Amend the current zoning ordinance to prevent inappropriate construction, development, or site disturbance in areas with known Karst features. e. Work with the Department of Environmental Quality to monitor mineral resource exploration activities so as to ensure groundwater resources are not contaminated. f. Precede all potential development undertakings with test borings to determine whether or not hidden cavernous zones are present. g. Encourage developers to complete a detailed, site-specific soil survey before construction. h. Acknowledge the County's potential for affecting soil and water quality on a regional scale by supporting the | <p>County's Erosion and Sediment Control Ordinance.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Utilize zoning, subdivision, and site plan requirements to reduce the amount of impervious surface built in watersheds. j. Pursue cooperative programs with neighboring counties to reduce pollutant discharges into streams and rivers. k. Require all industries desiring to locate in the County to meet and maintain water quality standards. l. Encourage property owners in the floodplain to retain undeveloped property in a natural state. m. Prohibit further subdivision of lots in the floodplain for development. n. Consider designating environmentally sensitive areas with C-1 Conservation zoning, perpetually protecting such areas from development. o. Adhere to the Virginia Department of Forestry's Code of Silviculture Best Management Practices. |
|---|--|



Utilities

PUBLIC UTILITIES

The availability, quality, and cost of public utilities (electrical power, water supply, and wastewater disposal) can be used by local governments to guide where development will likely occur. Generally, development should be located in areas where these services can be provided for the least cost. The Comprehensive Plan should serve as a guide for decision making and establish policy guidelines for when, where, and how to provide public utilities.

Water Availability. Public water in Bath County is available from the Bath County Service Authority (BCSA) for: Warm Springs (2007), West Warm Springs, Mitchelltown, Bacova, Ashwood, Cedar Creek, Thomastown, Routier Hill, Carlover, Switchback, Clifton Forge Mountain, Millboro and Chimney Run. Water distributed to customers in Millboro is obtained through bulk water purchase agreement from the Millboro Water Association. Bath County Service Authority purchases bulk water from Virginia Hot Springs Water Company and serves residents of Hot Springs, Thomastown, Crowdertown. Individual wells and or springs serve other portions and residents of the County.

Water System. The Bath County Service Authority has an on going infrastructure program to improve and expand as economically feasible: service, distribution lines and sources. Currently, the system has two springs and six wells. The wells are located above the High School, on Clifton Forge Mountain, above the Old Dairy (2006), Ashwood, Cedar Creek, and a small well above Warm Springs (2007). In 2006, the Warm Springs Investment Company (WSIC) conveyed to Bath County Service Authority (BCSA) a well and approximately 49,694 feet of distributions lines, fire hydrants, etc. In 2007, the Bath County Service Authority will begin to serve the former customers of Warm Springs Water Association and construct 8,170 feet of new distribution lines in the Warm Springs area. On or about June 2007 the BCSA will own

and operate approximately 404,373 feet of distribution lines. Bath County Service Authority has eleven pumping stations that pump water to ten storage tanks located throughout the service area. Total storage capacity is approximately 1,300,000 gallons with waterline connections to the two suppliers that have a combined storage of approximately 1,900,000 gallons. The daily water consumption taken from residential water meters is approximately 70,000 gallons per day. Bath County Service Authority also provides over 200 fire hydrants for the service area. The Bath County Service Authority has a staff of nine employees, and a team of professionals and vendors who provide administrative, logistical and maintenance support for the water/wastewater systems. The estimated value of the water system is approximately fifteen million dollars (\$15,000,000) and growing.

Water Rates and Fees. The monthly base water rate is \$16.00 per residential connection from 0 – 4,200 gallons of water, approximately \$6.50 lower than surrounding counties. A one hundred dollar system connection fee, material and labor costs are assessed for each new connection, also well below the average charged by surrounding counties. New units will be charged a \$2,300.00 system development fee. The system development fee was established in 2006 to assist in paying for growth, meeting capital needs, and for recovering equity previously invested in the system. There are circumstances where this fee may be reduced depending on individual circumstances (refer to Bath County Service Authority Rules and Regulations). The majority of Virginia counties charge fees of this nature in order to benefit their existing customers by passing the cost of development to future customers and developers. A system availability fee may be charged to developers who reserve a connection for lots pending a building permit. Rates and fees are not expected to increase significantly over the next four

years. In the event an increase is necessary public input will be solicited and considered (same process for wastewater increases).

Challenges. In June 2006 the Virginia Department of Health issued a notice of violation for two springs (Queen and Smith) for being under the influence of surface water. Both springs provide substantial capacity to the water system but they must be removed from service and will be difficult to replace. In 2006, Bath County Service Authority obtained a 150-gallon per minute well from the Warm Springs Investment Company (above the Old Dairy) and excess capacity will be used to offset substantial amounts of the loss of the springs. However as new homes come on line, less and less of that capacity will be available. In 2000, the well above the High School came on line. An initial result of 50 gallons per minute proved to be short lived and the final net result was 25 gallons per minute. Three test wells have been drilled as a water source for the residents of Millboro Springs who have been obtaining their water from private wells that contain sulfur and iron deposits. The wells were drilled to a depth beyond 600 feet and water was not found. Challenges to the system (growth, contamination, regulation, and scarcity) are expected to increase in the future; therefore, it becomes important to seek additional sources and protect the existing sources from contamination.

Wastewater Treatment

Wastewater Treatment Availability. Public wastewater treatment service is available through Bath County Service Authority to residents of Millboro, Bacova, Mitchelltown, Hot Springs, Ashwood, Thomastown, Crowdertown, Homestead Preserve, West Warm Springs and Cedar Creek Trailer Park. The Warm Springs Sanitation Commission provides service to Warm Springs.

Wastewater system. The Bath County Service Authority owns and operates miles of distribution/collections lines, eleven sewer pumps/stations and three wastewater treatment plants in Hot Springs, Millboro and Cedar Creek. The 450,000 gallons per day Hot Springs/Regional wastewater treatment plant (HSRWTP) was constructed in 1985 and currently processes approximately 350,000 gallons of wastewater daily. This plant treats wastewater by oxidation, aeration and disinfection by chlorine providing secondary treatment and meets Virginia Health Department standards. When the Homestead Preserve project is completed and combined with normal growth, the plant will statistically be above capacity and will have to be replaced or enlarged. The Warm Springs Investment Company has agreed to pay the Bath County Service Authority \$4,310,748 cash; interest and fees that will total approximately 7.8 million dollars over ten years as their fair share cost of the plant capacity upgrade. On a cost share basis for a \$6,200,000 plant (2006 dollars) Warm Springs Investment Company will provide approximately 83.17% of the construction costs and Virginia Hot Springs L.C. downtown properties 7.43%. Bath County Service Authority will be responsible for 9.4% or approximately \$582,000.00. The Bath County Service Authority plans to use Warm Springs Investment Company cost share as the model for future developments. The circa 1989 Millboro plant can process 50,000 gallons a day by a more modern design technology that uses ultra violet instead of chlorine to treat the discharge. In 2006, Bath County Service Authority assumed ownership of a new 15,000 gallon per day plant that was provided for the Cedar Creek trailer park by Bath County through a HUD grant. In 2007, the Bath County Service Authority will own and maintain approximately 289,062 feet of wastewater collection lines to include 12,323 feet conveyed from Warm Springs Investment Company in 2006. When the Homestead Preserve project is completed in 2009,

Warm Springs Investment Company will have conveyed to Bath County Service Authority 25,062 feet of sewer collection lines. The Bath County terrain is such that line and treatment plants can be located in such a manner to optimize the use of gravity flow, thus reducing the need for expensive pump stations. Currently, Bath County Service Authority has pump stations in Bacova, Campbell Hollow (3), Bacova Junction, West Warm Springs (3), Ashwood, Mitchelltown and Switchback. The Hot Springs Wastewater Treatment Plant is located down stream from most of the service area; however, its location is not optimal.

Rates and Fees. The monthly residential rate for wastewater service is \$19.00, approximately \$8.00 less than surrounding Counties. The connection fee is \$100.00 plus labor and material. New units will be charged a \$2,800.00 system development fee similar to that charge for water. A system availability fee may also be charged to developers.

Challenges. The majority of the miles of wastewater collection and distribution/collection lines are in serviceable condition. However, lines in and around Hot Springs and Ashwood are old and may have to be replaced. The increased demand for wastewater treatment capacity will cause Bath County Service Authority to upgrade the existing plant or build a new plant. Because of size limitations and engineering problems it may not be economically feasible to upgrade the existing plant at its present location. If a new plant is required, location, size, design, technology, Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) and Health Regulations are important considerations. Wastewater treatment plants over 650,000 gallons per day that discharge into the Chesapeake Bay estuary and watershed must meet strict requirements.

Initiatives to protect the Chesapeake Bay and the environment, development, and demands to treat wastewater by regional treatment plants or by separate Bath County Service Authority plants are expected to increase. For instance:

- In the event the Warm Springs Treatment Plant cannot sustain or meet Department of Environmental Quality standards, it may become necessary to provide wastewater service for Warm Springs.
- Other villages and future developments may require wastewater treatment service or oversight.
- The Bath County Service Authority may have to increase the mandatory 300 feet connection distance to cause developers to use the Hot Springs Wastewater Treatment Plant instead of septic systems or on site treatment facilities that may cause future environmental problems, which will have to be corrected by the taxpayers.

Additional Service Providers:

Warm Springs Sanitation Commission:

WSSC was formed in June of 1956 for the purpose of providing a sewerage system for the people of Warm Springs. It currently has 134 customers, and looks to add another 75 through service to the Homestead Preserve homeowners. It has a seven member Board, with representatives appointed by the head of the Virginia Department of Health and serving four year

terms. They boast of their infrequent rate increases, and are currently expanding their treatment facility with the help of the Homestead Preserve.

Warm Springs Water Association:

WSWA was formed in the 1960's as a corporation under the SCC. It is currently in the process of transitioning to be taken over by the Bath County Service Authority, at which point, its seven member Board will dissolve.

BARC:

Incorporated in 1938, BARC Electric Cooperative has grown from 1,008 meters served to over 12,000 today. Its service area originally provided power for Bath, Alleghany and Rockbridge Counties (hence the name) but has since grown to include Augusta and Highland Counties as well.

It is a non-profit, tax-paying organization vitally interested in the residential, industrial and commercial development of its service area. Power for BARC members is generated at the Clover Power Station in Halifax County, Virginia.

BARC employs over 45 full-time people, and is governed by a seven member Board of Directors with daily operations being overseen by the managerial staff, headed by a General Manager/CEO.

TDS Telecom:

TDS Telecom brings locally-based telecommunications services to 900 rural and suburban communities across the United States. Founded in 1969, TDS is a growing part of the Telephone and Data System, Inc. TDS provides the following services to its customers:

- Local Telephone Service
- Long Distance Service, Calling Cards, Toll-Free Service
- Voice Mail

- Centrex
- ISDN-PRI
- Digital Transport Services
- Direct Inward Dial/Direct Outward Dial Services
- Business Telephone Systems/Key & PBX including VoIP Systems
- Maintenance Plans
- High Speed Data Transport/DS1/DS3 10/100 Mbps to 1 Gig Ethernet
- Business Data Solutions
- Internet Access/Dial-Up/DSL Services/Symmetrical Internet up to 45 Meg Up and Down Speeds
- Web Hosting
- Managed Data Services/Co-Location Services/Managed Network Services/ Virtual Private Networks
- Private Networks, and
- Managed Application Services.

MGW:

MGW Communications, through its subsidiaries, Telephone and Networks are providing high speed internet to all of their wire line exchanges. MGW Networks is also providing high speed in other areas like the Millboro community, and are bringing two more wireless sights up for more coverage. MGW is constantly upgrading equipment to provide the best service to its customers. They have just installed in the McClung exchange gigE bandwidth equipment. In the Mt. Grove exchange, they are exploring the possibility of adding additional equipment to enhance broadband capabilities.

Wireless Telecommunications

Bath County is served by several major wireless telecommunications providers, with Verizon currently having the most continuous coverage. As technologies evolve, more people move into the County, and more traffic is placed on our road network in the future, there will be an increased demand for wireless communications services such as phones, pagers, video, and the internet.

In order to accommodate such an increasing appetite for these amenities, the County will have to become more technologically savvy. It will also need to institute incentives and regulations to strike a balance between modernization and preservation. The County should adopt a comprehensive Telecommunications Ordinance that regulates placement, height, screening and other aspects of proposed structures. It should work with various providers to ensure that high standards are developed and met.

Efforts should also be supported to encourage telecommuting through the use of computer technology in the County which is becoming more popular nationwide. Telecommuting jobs can help to reduce the amount of travel time on County roads, decreasing both air pollution and fuel consumption.

Renewable Energy Facilities

The Virginia Department of Mines, Minerals, and Energy has commissioned James Madison University to create the Virginia Renewable Scoring System for Siting (VRS³).

The goal of the project is to create a technical resource with which any parcel of land across Virginia can be evaluated and a numerical score derived that describes its suitability for renewable energy development. This score will reflect a range of attributes including energy resource, economic viability, and environmental sensitivities. The VRS³ will consider wind and solar resources, proximity to electric power transmission systems, potential impacts to natural and historic resources and to economically disadvantaged or minority communities, and compatibility with the local land use plan.

The stated vision for the VRS³ is to provide a tool to inform counties, regions,

and communities to assist them in evaluating their lands in a quantitative fashion as they consider potential wind and solar power projects. While Bath County intends to examine and consider all sites labeled as suitable for renewable energy development by the VRS³, it is also important for our County to set our own guidelines for how Bath County's renewable energy resources should or could be developed.

Those seeking to harness the County's renewable energy resources in order to contribute to the shifting paradigm of sustainable energy production should first meet certain requirements to ensure that the size and scale of their projects are compatible with Bath County's community vision as expressed by other aspects of this Comprehensive Plan. For instance, a primary goal of this Plan is to protect the scenic viewsheds and rural character that make this County and region so unique and treasured. Therefore, a viewshed assessment appropriate to the level of the project (small-scale, community wind, or utility-scale) should be an integral part of any review process for renewable energy facilities.

There is much debate regarding the effects of large-scale renewable energy facilities on a community's quality of life including both positive and negative effects on economic development, tourism, and environmental resources. At all levels, there are on-going disputes over federal tax credits, land leases, tax revenue generation, job creation, bird and bat impacts, endangered species habitats, and other issues too numerous to include here. Bath County recognizes that there are logical and powerful arguments on both sides of all of the various issues. Those who are both in favor of and against the development of large-scale renewable energy facilities are very passionate and committed in their beliefs. As a result, public discourse over the issues surrounding renewable energy

development should be encouraged so that all issues can be examined openly.

Our intent at this time is not to take a final position, but to assure that we consider all the factors and protect that which is most dear when we are asked to evaluate proposals for potential large-scale renewable energy projects. The focus here will be on wind development given that it is the most identifiable renewable energy resource in the County.

Many communities across the country have successfully addressed the volatile issues surrounding large-scale wind facilities in particular, while others have seen virtually irreparable damage done as the fabric of their communities has been split over these issues. As one of some twenty counties across Virginia that have been identified as Priority 1 locations for the potential of developable wind resources, Bath County recognizes that it cannot avoid a discussion of the issues associated with large-scale development. The County seeks to proactively plan for a fair, reasoned, and logical approach to decision-making with regard to proposals that may come forward for the installation of large-scale wind facilities.

Numerous considerations must be addressed during the land use planning, review, and permitting processes for wind energy facilities. Overlays of extra local controls and conditions may be required for land areas designated by the County as having the potential for future wind energy development. Specific requirements and/or limitations should be applied based upon the level and scale of development (small-scale, community wind, or utility-scale). In addition to the height of structures permitted, examples of other conditions and operational issues where local controls may be required include, but are not limited to:

Conditions

- Construction Noise / Dust / Access Road Cuts / Land Clearing / Work Schedule
- Erosion & Sediment Control / Stormwater
- Structural Style / Color / Advertising
- Auxiliary Buildings / Transmission Lines / Access Roads / Parking Areas / Repair Areas – Boneyards / Blade Storage

Operations

- Any Necessary Noise Controls - once operational
- Any interference with TV Reception
- Any Shadows, Flicker, Strobe
- Lighting – Color / Blinking / Number
- Ice Throws
- Lightning Strikes
- Broken Blades
- Safety Zones / Setbacks
- Spillage Areas
- Repair / Maintenance and Operation Schedules
- Technology Upgrades

Where possible, the application and review procedure should establish, in advance, minimum levels of acceptable conditions and operational requirements, including obligations and procedures for decommissioning and removal of unused and/or abandoned structures or facilities associated with the project. Where the establishment of minimum condition or requirement levels is not possible, guidance should be provided by general standards, also approved in advance by the County.

Some issues are harder to get a handle on, but may still need to be addressed in the review process nonetheless. They include, but are not limited to:

- Potential Impacts on the Local Economy – including local property and sales tax revenues, the number of construction jobs created locally,

the number and pay scale of operational jobs created locally, and the potential for indirect economic activity in the local community

- Potential Impacts on Property Values
- Potential Impacts on Tourism / Other Businesses
- Potential Impacts on Historic and Architectural Resources
- Potential Impacts on Visual Resources / Viewsheds

There are additional issues that are important to the County, but there may not be enough expertise or resources available to adequately address them at the local level. Nor are they necessarily under local control or land use authority. Therefore, such issues are more appropriately addressed by the state and federal agencies assigned to oversee them. They include, but are not limited to:

- Potential for Adverse Impacts on Wildlife, Avian, and Bat Species
- Potential for and the Actual Amount of Emissions Reduction

With all of the specific project concerns that need to be addressed at the local level, there are some issues that while significant to the broader national debate are not appropriate for consideration in the local land use review process. They include, but are not limited to:

- Consistency of Wind Generation
- Big Business / Foreign Business Involvement
- Federal Tax Credits

General Planning Policies

While scenic resources are a key element of Bath County's economy and quality of life, it is important that the County not dismiss the possibilities offered by wind development over the primary concern of

viewshed. The County has not yet received an application for wind facility of any level.

Thus, there is an opportunity to examine the various aspects surrounding the siting of such facilities in a civil and reasoned manner. Specific policies relating to the location and placement of wind facilities should be established before applications are received so that everyone involved will understand the playing field and what is expected of them.

For instance, individual systems, or small wind energy development, could be left to the discretion of landowners or administrative decision-makers, as long as specific conditions established in the zoning ordinance are met and other aspects of the Land Use Regulations are not violated. Mid-scale "community" wind projects that provide power directly to a village or subdivision could be subject to analysis, but not evaluated as rigorously as the large, industrial-scale facilities.

There are many benefits to be gleaned both from the technologies associated with creating systems that may help to wean the nation off of fossil fuel dependence, and to the discussion of issues inherently associated with such a shift. It is important that Bath County's policy thoroughly addresses citizen concerns while allowing for the possibility of innovative local solutions to global problems.

Recommendations:

1. Bath County should identify and establish "wind development" overlay zones indicating the levels of wind development that may be permitted or conditionally permitted for each area of the county (small-scale, community scale, or industrial-scale development). Any areas where all levels of wind development will

be prohibited should also be identified.

Note – Upon its completion, the County should review the results of the Virginia Renewable Scoring System for Siting (VRS³) to identify potential locations, if any, where large-scale development zones may be conditionally considered.

2. Language should be added by ordinance amendment or policy specifically spelling out siting and permitting criteria for all levels of wind development within each of the wind development zones. There should be a clearly established permitting process for each level of development, as well as clear points for public input and comment. In order for siting decisions to be made in a timely manner, the ordinance amendment or policy should list specific advance information and prior approvals required from the applicant before an application will be considered, expectations for other information or approvals that will be required during the consideration process, and any anticipated post-approval requirements. The roles and responsibilities of appropriate federal, state, and local entities should be specified and sequenced to prevent undue delays in the permitting process.
3. Wind energy technology is a complex field. The County staff and officials may not possess the expertise or have the time and resources available to adequately address many of the specific concerns and issues surrounding large-scale wind development. In order to ensure sound decision-

making by the County and to keep the process focused on the facts of the case rather than speculation, the County should:

- a. Require the applicant to obtain all required federal and state permits and approvals in advance of submission of the application to the County. This may assist the County in evaluating key issues raised by the application and help to expedite the local decision-making process because many of the most contentious issues will have at least been nominally addressed prior to the County's receipt of the application.
 - b. Retain a technical consultant with expertise in large-scale wind facility siting to negotiate County interests with developers and to advise the County in the review and consideration process.
4. Written legal agreements should be obtained binding all parties involved to the conditions for construction, operation, and removal of the large-scale facilities throughout the term of any special use permit issued and throughout subsequent permit renewals. Fully adequate bonding levels should be required so that the facilities can be properly removed without cost to the land owner or the County should removal be necessary due to unmet conditions or abandonment by the owner or operator of the facilities.

Note - Research indicates that in large-scale wind energy projects, the initial applicant is rarely the final owner of the project. The

project may change hands several times between the initial application, construction, and operation. The owner of the project at the various stages is rarely the land owner. This situation can present issues for both the County and the land owner. Conditional Use Permits (CUPs) and conditions associated with the permits travel with the land, not the project owner or operator. Therefore, the County must hold the land owner responsible if the conditions of the permit are not met.

UTILITIES GOALS

1. Continue to evaluate future operations and maintenance needs for the County's water and sewerage system.

2. Consider which areas of the County would benefit most from the development of a public water or sewerage system.
3. Provide public water and sewer, power, and telecommunications options for existing businesses and residential areas of highest densities and build additional capacity for future planned growth.
4. Discourage construction of industrial scale wind towers on ridgelines in Bath County, thereby preserving public viewsheds.

OBJECTIVES

- a. Seek innovative financing options to ensure that appropriate improvements be made to the County's water and sewerage systems as needs arise.
- b. Institute a policy to ensure that developers, and not taxpayers, pay for the costs and impacts of development within the County.
- c. Strive to provide where feasible public water and sewer to high-density areas that are affected most by health, supply, and potability problems.
- d. Consider the use of alternative sewer systems to handle household needs in areas with little development, and create standards that include oversight from the Virginia Department of Health and/or the Bath County Service Authority.
- e. Investigate options for providing citizens access to a septic tank pump truck in order to improve conditions of older septic systems.
- f. Prioritize areas in need of public water and/or sewer based on public safety (the potential for aquifer contamination), excessive slope, and the potential for growth
- g. Encourage partnerships among existing utility providers that will support appropriate economic development endeavors.
- h. Develop or obtain other water sources and facilities, such as an area treatment plant for the Jackson and Cowpasture River basins.
- i. Protect quality of existing sources through revisions of the Land Use Regulations.
- j. Protect wellheads by regulating development and zoning within the critical radius of one thousand feet.
- k. Expand the existing wastewater treatment plant or construct a new one with increased capacity.
- l. Consider adding a buffering requirement for new utility facilities that will provide screening between various uses.



E d u c a t i o n

EDUCATION

Of all government expenditures, education is by far the most important and, as in most localities, the largest single item in the County budget. The quality of schooling our children receive shapes their lives as individuals, and is also a major determinant in attracting new residents to the County and retaining current ones.

School Facilities

Bath County is home to two elementary schools, Millboro Elementary and Valley Elementary. Millboro Elementary, located in the village of Millboro between Goshen and Warm Springs, enrolled 175 students in 2006-2007. Since construction of the school was completed in 1989, it is considered a modern facility, wired for technology (voice, video, and data resources). The school, however, is in need of an auditorium, which was included in the School Board's capital improvements plan for funding for several years, but was not approved for funding as a capital project.

Valley Elementary, on the other hand, was built in the 1960s and underwent extensive renovations and received a large addition, completed in 2001. The \$3.5 million project included a new wing for four classrooms, a technology lab, and a science lab. It also benefited from the relocation of an upgraded media learning center and new wiring for online resources. Valley Elementary, located just south of Hot Springs, enrolled 280 students in 2006-2007.

Bath County High School, which houses grades 8-12, had an enrollment of 345 students in 2006-2007. The original school, built in 1954, has had several additions and is currently undergoing an \$8.7 million renovation begun in 2006 that includes new windows, HVAC, a new roof, and ADA/accessibility upgrades. Funding

for these items is included in the School Board's five-year capital improvements plan.

Educational Programs

The Bath County School Board directs a program of public education for approximately 765 students. Course offerings have been designed to serve the needs and interests of individual students, as well as meet overall educational goals as defined by the School Board long-range plan, the Virginia Standards of Quality, Standards of Accreditation, and applicable Federal standards. As of 2006-07 school year, all County schools remain fully accredited based on the Federal and Virginia assessments, including Standards of Learning, and No Child Left Behind. County schools provide a full spectrum of services for regular and special needs children. Mainstream and special education teachers work closely with school psychologists and child study teams to ensure successful placement and progress for all children. In addition, counseling services are available to all students so as to support educational, sociological, psychological, and career needs.

Bath County schools also provide creative outlets for students. Enrichment programs, such as special drama activities and music programs, are offered to all students. Programs for gifted students include extension activities, as well as participation in "Destination Imagination" and "Future Problem Solving" competitions. At the high school level, advanced students meeting the entrance qualification are eligible to participate in the Jackson River Governor's School for Math, Science, and Technology. This half-day program is based at Dabney S. Lancaster Community College in Clifton Forge, and students travel to that program daily, returning to Bath County High School for the remainder of the instructional day. Bath County students participate in the

Field Biology Regional Governor's School at Dabney S. Lancaster Community College in Clifton Forge, and the Massanutten Regional Governor's School in Harrisonburg every summer. Two students from the County are selected to attend each school. The gifted program also funds special requests for students to attend activities such as space camp and enrichment camp. In addition, advanced placement courses and dual enrollment opportunities are available for all academically advanced students.

The Distance Learning program at BCHS is used extensively for dual enrollment classes. This compressed-video based lab, opened in 2001, is also used for professional staff development and is available for community/local business use, as well.

Vocational training is available at the Mertz Career and Technical Education Center located at Bath County High School for students planning to enter the labor force immediately after graduation. Career and Technical Education courses are offered in auto mechanics, vocational agriculture, business management, life management skills, family management, food occupations, hospitality and tourism, CADD (computer-aided drawing and design), technology, small engine repair, and building trades. A dual enrollment program in welding at Dabney S. Lancaster Community College is available for seniors. The above courses correlate well with curriculum requirements at the local Dabney S. Lancaster Community College.

School Enrollment and Ranking

In school year 2006-07, total enrollment in Bath County's public school system was 765 students.

All three schools continue to meet full Virginia Standards of Learning accreditation, and continue to exceed No Child Left Behind

– Adequate Yearly Progress standards, for full accreditation.

Education Spending

In order to provide local students with quality schooling, Bath County has been forced to allot a disproportionately high ratio of local monies (versus State funding) to education. In recent years, excessive local allocation has been necessary to counteract effects of the formula used by the State in determining funding assistance. The formula, called the composite index, consists of variables representing each locality's adjusted gross income, retail sales, property values, average daily membership (number of students), and population. Because of the County's relatively high proportion of local revenues, as compared to its relatively small population size and average daily membership, Bath's composite index is very high, resulting in very low State funding.

Higher Education

The number of high school seniors with plans for post-secondary education at the time of graduation is positive.

Although there is no institution of higher learning in Bath County, there are several colleges and universities relatively nearby. These include liberal arts schools such as Eastern Mennonite University and Bridgewater College, located in the Harrisonburg area, and Mary Baldwin College in Staunton. Dabney S. Lancaster Community College which offers both day and night classes, is located in Clifton Forge. Blue Ridge Community College is in Weyers Cave. Washington and Lee University and Virginia Military Institute are located in Lexington, and James Madison University, is nearby in Harrisonburg. In addition, the University of Virginia in Charlottesville and Virginia Tech in Blacksburg are each approximately two hours away. Also within the two hour driving range are Roanoke College and Hollins

College, in the Roanoke area, as well as Davis and Elkins College in Elkins, West Virginia.

EDUCATION GOALS

1. Ensure that every student enrolled receives a quality education appropriate to the student's aptitudes and aspirations.

2. Continue to nurture and prepare students for post-graduation endeavors and success.
3. Produce graduates who become citizens with strong academic, technical, physical, and social skills and who possess an appreciation for the arts.
4. Build partnerships between the school system and local businesses, organizations, and agencies to expand regional career-tech programs thereby maximizing opportunities for learning and collaborative experiences.
5. To enable our schools to remain an integral part of our unique community and a source of public pride.
6. Increase local opportunities for post-secondary and adult education training for Bath County residents.

OBJECTIVES

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Continue to develop a strong core curriculum aligned with Standards of Learning, State and Federal mandates, and local needs. b. Promote technology to enhance and sustain the teaching process and school administration. c. Promote a safe and respectful environment that is conducive to teaching and to learning. d. Continue to upgrade existing facilities at Bath County High School, Valley Elementary School, and Millboro Elementary School to provide for long-term viability and avoid crisis points. e. Foster an apprenticeship program between the school system and local businesses and agencies in order to prepare high school students for trade certifications and job placement. f. Facilitate mentoring and educational opportunities for students through local resources in and outside the County. g. In conjunction with several surrounding counties, support distance learning for | <p>students and adults via satellites courses linked with community colleges and universities in the region.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> h. Enhance communication between and among students, parents, personnel (school level to superintendent), School Board, Board of Supervisors, and community and support volunteer programs in our schools. i. Utilize computer labs at the public schools to offer classes in computer technology to aid adult education in the community. j. Value and compensate our educational professionals with regionally competitive salaries, incentives, professional development opportunities, and proper training. k. Strengthen and support anti-drug/anti-tobacco programs and policy enforcement in order to promote a drug-free environment in our schools. |
|---|--|

- l. Sustain a comprehensive curriculum that embraces a challenging environment for academic, athletics, arts, music, and vocational programs.
- m. Promote the re-establishment of an education foundation to support educational needs and opportunities that will include support from interested citizens and businesses in the community.
- n. Institute a policy to ensure that developers, and not taxpayers, pay for the costs and impacts of development within the County.



Transportation

TRANSPORTATION

Transportation is a word that means different things to different people. To most individuals, it means a car; to the truck driver or bicyclist it means roads; to a child it means sidewalks; to the elderly or handicapped it means buses or lift-equipped vans; to the pilot it means airports; to the trainmaster it means railroads; but, to everyone it means a link. Transportation is the thread that links people with places. Moving people around and through Bath County is an important issue and decision-makers will rely on this transportation element for guidance in making future transportation decisions which will affect not only how people are transported but also how public dollars are to be spent.

In addition, transportation plays an important role in influencing growth patterns. The creation or improvement of roads can open land to development, change travel routes in ways that immediately change individual land use decisions, and eventually can redirect land use patterns. Because of this close interrelationship, the transportation element must be developed and reviewed in terms of its consistency with other elements of the comprehensive plan, especially the land use element.

Existing Transportation Facilities

Bath County is served by a number of primary, secondary, and collector roadways, a general aviation airport, passenger and freight rail, private taxi and limousine services, and several motor freight carriers.

Roadways – The Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) classifies major roads in the state by the way they function within the road network. This function is determined by the type of traffic operating on a road and how each road functions relative to other roads. The purpose of the functional classification system is to establish the responsibilities of the state, the

counties, and municipalities in the planning and development of transportation systems, and to assure the development of an integrated, balanced statewide transportation system.

Functional classification helps determine which governmental unit will be responsible for each roadway. Functional classifications applicable to Bath County are as follows:

Primary Roads – Primary roads are generally routes providing service which is relatively continuous and of relatively high traffic volume, long average trip length, high operating speed, and high mobility importance. Every United States (U.S.) numbered highway is a primary road with further classification as rural or urban. In Virginia, primary roads are either U.S. primaries or State primaries.

There is one U.S. primary road serving Bath County. U.S. Primary Route 220 runs the entire length of the County passing through its most densely populated sections. U.S. Route 220 is Bath County's main north-south highway providing a direct connection to Covington, Clifton Forge, and Interstate 64 to the south, and to Highland County and northeastern West Virginia to the north.

Bath County is also served by two state primary routes. State Primary Route 39 is the County's major east-west highway passing through Brattons Bridge, Bath Alum, West Warm Springs, and Mountain Grove. Route 39 provides access to Lexington, Route 11, and Interstate 81 to the east and Marlinton, West Virginia, and U.S. Route 219 to the west. State Primary Route 42 serves the southeastern quadrant of the County passing through Nimrod Hall, Millboro Springs, and Brattons Bridge. Route 42 provides access to U.S. Route 60

and Interstate 64 to the south and Staunton and Interstate 81 to the north.

Secondary Roads – Secondary roads are generally maintained by counties or cities with average traffic volume, trip length, and operating speed. Secondary roads also collect and distribute traffic between local roads or primary roads and serve as a link between land access and mobility needs. There are more than 243 miles of secondary roads in Bath County providing access to housing, jobs, medical facilities, and shopping. Bath County currently works with VDOT to ensure that secondary facilities are maintained in an acceptable manner by including needed maintenance and repair projects in the State's *Six Year Improvement Program*.

This money has been targeted for secondary road repair, paving, and bridge improvements throughout the County. It is also important to note that VDOT does all maintenance of Bath County Roads, including snow removal.

The maintenance of acceptable levels of service (LOS) on roadways is essential to preserving and enhancing interregional mobility, increasing transportation efficiency, and coordinating transportation and land development. Levels of service are qualitative measures describing operating conditions of roadways and are given designations from A through F with A representing the best operating conditions and F the worst. Level of Service C is the generally accepted minimum operating standard for rural primary roadways. Under LOS C conditions, a driver is able to maintain the set speed limit, stopping only for stop signs or signals. When proceeding through a stop sign or green light, the driver is able to return to the set speed limit without delay. A driver may occasionally slow down for cars entering the roadway from intersecting streets or driveways, however, the majority of the trip can be completed without impedence.

To ensure that the existing transportation network is operating in an acceptable manner, the County monitors annual traffic volumes. Traffic counts combined with the roadway functional classification, provide the County with information necessary to determine existing levels of service, make informed decisions about needed roadway improvements, and identify potential service delivery problems before they occur. This is particularly useful when historical counts are available allowing for the projection of future traffic volumes based on past trends. Monitoring traffic count data also allows for the realistic assessment of the impact of proposed development on the existing transportation network.

Traffic counts alone do little to provide a clear picture of operational conditions of the transportation network.

Due to the combination of rolling and mountainous terrain throughout Bath County, the level of service conditions for mountainous terrain were used for this analysis. The maximum daily traffic numbers also assume that ten percent (10%) of all traffic will occur during the peak travel hours and that, due to terrain, 60% of the roadway segments are no passing zones.

Based on the most recent counts supplied by the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) and the level of service guidelines provided in the 1994 *Highway Capacity Manual*, the existing roadway network in Bath County provides a generally good level of service for motor vehicle transport. There are, however, three roadway segments in the County that are operating at Level of Service D. These segments are U.S. Route 220 from Hot Springs to State Route 39; U.S. Route 220 from State Route 39 to Warm Springs; and, State Route 615 between State Route 687 and U.S. Route 220. Although these segments are not operating at a failing level

of service, only minimal increases in daily traffic would result in failures.

Airports – Bath County is currently served by Ingalls Field, a commercial airport atop Warm Springs Mountain. Ingalls field has a main runway and a crosswind runway. The main runway is 5,601 feet in length and is 100 feet wide. It can accommodate all but the largest aircraft including those of the size and weight of a DC-9 and smaller. The crosswind runway is currently a grass runway accommodating gliders and light aircraft. The airport has a full instrument landing approach and has also obtained global positioning approach capability. Although there is no scheduled commercial airline service to the airport, general aviation and charter services are provided. The airport is currently pursuing runway expansion and obstacle removal to meet federal standards, and is soliciting County funds as a 2% project match.

The airport is currently owned by the Ingalls Field Airport Authority, which was formed in 1978 by the Counties of Bath and Alleghany and the Cities of Covington and Clifton Forge. In late 1994, all members of the Authority except Bath County withdrew, raising serious questions about the future of the airport.

Rail – The only operating railroad in Bath County is the Buckingham Branch Railroad tract that traverses the southeastern portion of the County passing through Millboro. The tract lies adjacent to the Millboro Industrial Park. The line extends westward through Clifton Forge and Covington and into West Virginia. It extends eastward through Staunton and Charlottesville, ending at the Richmond rail terminal. The portion of the line between Staunton and Clifton Forge is known as the Mountain Line.

Although the Mountain Line carries both freight and passenger traffic, there are no terminals or stations in Bath County. Freight traffic along the Mountain Line

averages between three and five million gross tons per mile of track per year.

Amtrak's "Cardinal" passenger train operates along the line three times a week as it travels between Washington and Chicago via Charleston and Cincinnati. The passenger station nearest to Bath County is in Clifton Forge, a small city about five miles south of the Bath County line. Ridership on the "Cardinal" averages close to 45,000 passengers a year with approximately 2,800 of those passengers ticketed to Clifton Forge.

CSX, the previous owner, began to consider discontinuing the Mountain Line in 1989 and decided to either sell or abandon it by 1992. Local communities along the line felt strongly that the line was important to their future economic development. Consequently, the Greater Shenandoah Valley Development Commission was formed to negotiate purchase of the line. Buckingham Branch has since reevaluated the economic impact of keeping the Mountain Line running and at this time the line is still in operation.

Pedestrian Facilities – Bath County is graced with beautiful mountains, wooded areas, and an abundance of outdoor recreational facilities. Hiking is available throughout the County and is an important part of the tourist industry for the area.

Transportation Issues and Concerns

Bath County is predominantly rural, with residents living in small communities as well as isolated rural areas. The rural nature of the County increases the difficulty of providing adequate transportation alternatives for all residents. A major issue is the provision of transportation-disadvantaged services. A resident who is transportation-disadvantaged is one who,

due to physical or economic limitations, is unable to provide his/her own transportation.

There is no public transportation in Bath County, yet elderly, disabled, or economically disadvantaged residents must have some mode of transport to medical facilities, jobs, shopping, and other locations. A shuttle bus service between the homes of elderly residents and the Senior Center in West Warm Springs is currently in operation. In addition, the Valley Program for Aging Services (VPAS) is also available to provide demand response service to various medical facilities in the region.

Although Bath County has a well-maintained primary roadway network, secondary roadways are often in poor condition and can present safety hazards. In addition, limited access to interstate highways, commercial airports, and passenger rail service increase transportation costs for Bath County and discourage businesses from locating in the area. This becomes not only a transportation issue, but an economic development issue as well.

TRANSPORTATION GOALS

1. Encourage development of a safe, effective, and efficient roads, as well as bike and pedestrian trails that will shape and serve the future of Bath County.
2. Encourage greater utilization of existing and future transportation infrastructure to meet the social, economic, recreational, and environmental needs of Bath County.
3. Develop transportation plans and programs that respond to the needs of the elderly, disabled, and economically disadvantaged residents of Bath County.
4. Provide public information and encourage citizen involvement in the development of all transportation plans and programs for Bath County.
5. Increase public safety and improvements on all County roads.
6. New development should encourage creativity, a mix of uses, and connectivity through a variety of transportation means including roads, bicycle routes, and pedestrian trails.
7. Avoid the installation of traffic lights by constructing traffic circles to ensure that traffic in Bath County continues to flow smoothly and uninterrupted.

OBJECTIVES

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Maintain the existing primary and secondary road system at its current level or better, working with VDOT to ensure regularly scheduled maintenance and upgrades to meet existing and future traffic demand. b. All roads should be built to an appropriate scale and participation in the VDOT Rustic Roads program should be encouraged. c. Support VDOT policies and programs, which ensure the provision of adequate transportation infrastructure operating at acceptable levels of service, and provide for the maintenance and improved safety of all public roads. d. Complete an evaluation of Bath County's existing transportation system including a needs assessment to address transportation of the elderly, disabled, and economically disadvantaged. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> e. Encourage development that does not add more traffic to existing roads by implementing mixed-use zoning where appropriate and/or increased connectivity between compatible land uses. f. Institute a policy to ensure that developers, and not taxpayers, pay for the costs and impacts of development within the County. g. Support the marketing, maintenance, and development of existing air facilities and services to those facilities and encourage the development of additional air transportation services to meet demand. h. Support the maintenance and development of existing rail facilities and encourage the development of additional freight and passenger rail services to meet demand. |
|---|---|

- i. Work with the IDA to promote or attract industries that need spur access to industrial park.
- j. Consider designating Route 39 as a tourism corridor.
- k. Excessive vehicle speed and traffic should be controlled on County roads.
 - 1. Provide appropriate levels of enforcement and seek public input regarding trouble spots.
 - 2. A traffic calming program can be initiated seeking safer roads, vehicle speeds, and creative design.
 - 3. Add turnouts/truck lanes retrofitting existing roads with steep grades.
 - 4. Use roundabouts instead of stoplights where possible on both new development and existing roads.
- l. Add bicycle lanes to certain roads to incorporate recommendations of the CSPDC Bike Plan and leave other roads at existing widths, thus allowing for a variety of road types.
- m. Parking areas should be built in appropriate locations/scale and blend in to the built environment and aesthetics.
- n. Work to ensure that Route 220 receives a “Scenic Byway” designation.



Community Facilities

COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Parks & Recreation

The Bath County Department of Parks and Recreation is committed to making the County a better place to live, work, and play. Such commitment is evident in the wide variety of recreational activities, classes, and sports available to residents that are based on the needs of the community.

The Department offers a wide range of programs for adults and children, which range from organized sports to pool facilities in Ashwood at Valley Elementary School, and at the Old Millboro School. A skateboard park has also been added to the Valley Elementary grounds. The Parks and Recreation Department focuses on education, safety, physical activity, and community involvement.

The County has two primary park facilities: Ashwood Park and Old Millboro School offering County residents various forms of active recreation including swimming, softball, soccer, and playgrounds among others. These facilities are in addition to the vast federally-protected and state-protected parklands within the County used for outdoor recreation.

The County is currently working with the Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission to create and implement a Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan that could provide locals with safer access to these amenities, as well as draw tourists to enjoy scenic views and enviable outdoor activity. The County will also continue to pursue a myriad of programs for residents and visitors as needs evolve and opportunities present themselves.

Library Facilities

The Bath County Public Library, which is a branch of the Rockbridge Regional Library (www.rrlib.net), houses 27,500 titles, with access to the resources of the entire regional system via interlibrary loans and from public or college libraries all over the United States. In addition to books, patrons enjoy the availability of 56 magazines and collections of CDs and DVDs, and free high speed Internet access and Office computing such as Microsoft Word and PowerPoint. The Goshen Public Library serves Bath citizens as well; in fact, a Bath resident's free card is good in all 5 of the regional system's libraries. Three trustees appointed by the Board of Supervisors serve on the Library's governing Board of Trustees.

The Library offers bookmobile service through a deposit station in Williamsville and a stop at Millboro School. A van makes additional Bath County runs, serving seniors, children, and the homebound. Other services include a summer reading club for school-aged children and programs of literary and general interest to the public. The Thomas Craven Meeting Room is a popular meeting place. The Library's catalog is available 24/7 on the Library's Web site: www.rrlib.net/bath/default.htm. The library is located across from the Bath County Courthouse in Warm Springs, and is open six days per week.

Animal Shelter

The Bath County Animal Shelter is located at the County's waste handling site. The building contains 5 runs for dogs, including one that may serve as an isolation

run. It has 10 cages for cats. In 2006, the shelter admitted 108 dogs; 32 were returned to their owners, 25 were adopted, and 51 were euthanized. Of the 261 cats admitted, some 175 were feral and not adoptable, 43 of the remainder were adopted and 2 returned to their owners, the rest were euthanized.

The shelter has 2 full-time staff members, and 1 part-time kennel attendant. Because the facility is located at the County's waste handling site, the fill it rests on has allowed the building to settle substantially and unevenly, degrading structural integrity. The County could look at improvements under the Capital Improvement Plan if funding becomes available.

Solid Waste & Recycling

Solid waste in Bath County is picked up from dumpsters by Jack's Trash and Allied Waste, and hauled to the County Transfer Station, where Allied transports it to the landfill in Brunswick, Virginia. Recycling efforts are conducted through the use of green boxes, which go to Jackson River

Recycling. Recently, this center stopped taking glass products because they have lost their market for resale, but still accepts cardboard, plastics, and aluminum.

The State of Virginia has mandated that all rural localities need to recycle 15% of their solid municipal waste, as opposed to the 25% requirement for more urban environments. Bath County met this requirement for 2006, but there is still room for much improvement. Facilities for construction waste or community composting would greatly reduce the amount of trash that goes into the landfill, and are options that could be investigated further.

Mountain Crest Retirement Home

Mountain Crest will consist of 28 apartments in 7 buildings, with each building having 3 one-bedroom apartments for a total of 21 one-bedroom units. All of the units are low to moderate income, with rents affordable to those with incomes between 40 and 60 percent of the area median.

PUBLIC SAFETY AND HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

The Bath County Local Emergency Planning task force is made up of citizens from within the community that assist the Bath County Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC). The LEPC is appointed by the Bath County Board of Supervisors and serves the citizens of Bath County with an all-hazards approach to Disaster Planning.

The Sheriff's Office provides law enforcement protection for Bath County 24 hours per day, 365 days per year. Nineteen full-time officers provide services ranging from dispatching of 911 calls, patrolling county highways, investigations, transporting of prisoners, community education, traffic control and funeral escorts. In conjunction with these efforts, Virginia State Police provide vehicle accident investigations, etc.

There are five (5) Volunteer Fire Departments in the County- Burnsville, Bath-Highland, Hot Springs, Mountain Grove, and Millboro. Additionally, there are three (3) volunteer rescue squads- Hot Springs, Burnsville, and Millboro. These essential services rely on the good will and time of volunteers from the community.

Bath Community Ambulance Services, operated by Bath Community Hospital, provides mutual aid services to these volunteer squads. The VEPCO ambulance service assists with calls in the Mountain Grove area when available.

Bath County, a designated Medically Underserved Area (MUA), has as its asset a small rural hospital, Bath Community Hospital (BCH), which is a not for profit, Critical Access Hospital (CAH). Services

include twenty-four (24) hour emergency services, home health and hospice care, community outreach programs, such as HealthConnection, rehabilitation services, as well as a select group of diagnostic services and specialty clinics. There are four family practice physician offices located in the Ingalls building adjacent to BCH. Two Family Nurse Practitioners enhance these offices. A clinic in Millboro is available one evening a week, with services provided by a family nurse practitioner. Bacova Rehab and Wellness, a medical wellness facility is located in Bacova, operated by BCH, and staffed by exercise technicians and physical therapists.

Rockbridge Area Community Services Board provides a wide range of mental health and mental retardation services with clinic hours three days a week at their office in Bacova. A group home, The Wellman House and day support program, is located in Millboro.

The Springs Nursing Center provides skilled and long-term care in the 60 bed facility. The recent addition of an Alzheimer's unit expands services to this population.

The Bath County Health Department strives to meet the medical health issues and the environmental health issues of the community. The mission of the Bath County Social Services Department is to promote self-reliance and protection for residents through community-based services.

Valley Program for Aging Services provides 5 meals a week through an arrangement with Bath Community Hospital and assistance from Meals-on-Wheels

volunteer organization as well as homemaker/aide services.

The Senior Center, located in Warm Springs, Va. is the meeting place of Bath County senior citizens.

The Allegheny Free Clinic uses Bath Community Hospital as a location to screen new enrollees and to update information on current patients.

Safe Homes of Allegheny provides emergency services and a wide range of educational services to Bath County.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES, PUBLIC SAFETY, HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES GOALS

1. Continue to assure that the citizens of Bath County will have access to quality health care and social services.
2. Strive to ensure the health, safety, and welfare of all citizens and property in the County through all fire, rescue, and law enforcement entities.
3. Promote athletic, cultural, and recreational activities to all age groups.
4. Expand and strengthen community-based services and the distribution of public information throughout all areas of the County.
5. Reduce landfill waste by promoting recycling to meet a State-mandated goal of recycling 15% of all our County waste.
6. Provide a suitable Animal Shelter in an appropriate location.
7. Provide financial and other incentives for first responders.

OBJECTIVES

- a. Seek to provide Volunteer Fire and Rescue Services to cover the entire County and strive to reduce the emergency response times.
- b. Provide funding for new life-saving equipment (i.e. – AED's) to first responders.
- c. Continue to upgrade our current emergency communications system (an enhanced E911 system) to include reverse E911 system (as a "Phase II" implementation) through construction of Bath County Emergency Services complex.
- d. Institute a policy to ensure that developers, and not taxpayers, pay for the costs and impacts of development within the County.
- e. Implement opportunities for a program that maximizes recycling opportunities from business and residential construction waste and provide educational opportunities about these programs to the public.
- f. Explore partnerships with the National Forest Service and the Department of Game and Inland Fisheries that enhance more public lands for recreational use.
- g. Analyze the need for additional retirement home facilities in the community.
- h. Strive to renovate and utilize vacant buildings for community use or provide for adequate demolition and disposal of these vacant structures.

- i. Consider making financial incentives available for those willing to offer private social services (i.e. – day care, elder care...etc.).
- i. Strengthen the funding and maintenance of the library services and facilities to meet the needs of the growing and diverse population.
- k. Actively provide direction and incentives for the provision of information services for wireless communications, broadband services and other new technologies by adopting a comprehensive telecommunications ordinance.
- l. Require fire hydrants/dry hydrants in new subdivisions to provide additional water resources for our firefighters.
- m. Expand technical and job related training through a partnership with Dabney S. Lancaster Community College and other public and private vocational and job training programs in Bath County. Enhance technical and vocational education facilities and programs that will encourage volunteerism and career interest in health related fields.
- n. Support and enhance the Bath County Local Emergency Planning Committee, and continue to work with the Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission to establish an inter-jurisdictional task force.
- o. Enhance efforts that provide: linkages between public and nonprofit agencies between jurisdictions, grant-writing resources for public/non-profit partners, and generation of accurate public information.
- p. Annually review the Bath County Hazard Mitigation Plan.
- q. Support the formation of Memorandums of Understanding between local, regional, and state jurisdictions, and establish a clear management structure for forming plans, policy, procedure, and protocols that strive to achieve consensus among fire, EMS, law enforcement, and other health and safety related groups, and grant the ability to cross jurisdictional boundaries.



Land Use

LAND USE

Existing Land Use

Existing land uses in Bath County are primarily forestry and agriculture. Nearly 51% is national forest and another 5% is state natural area and forest. Such federal lands are reserved for conservation and recreational purposes. Approximately 14% is used for agricultural purposes. Much of the County's remaining land is undeveloped, privately-owned forest. A relatively small portion of land in Bath County is actually developed.

The current land use in Bath County is the result of gradual development over time. Existing land uses play an important role in determining future land use trends. All parcels of land in Bath County are classified into one of the following general categories:

- Residential
- Business
- Industrial
- Agricultural
- Conservation
- Tax Exempt (Government, Religious, Charitable, or Educational)

Warm Springs District

The Warm Springs District sits in the northwestern-most portion of the County. Within the district are the villages of Warm Springs (the County seat), Bacova, and Mountain Grove. The District has seen limited development with the recent exception of the Homestead Preserve. The Bacova Sewer project has brought needed infrastructure growth to residents living in the Bacova area.

Williamsville District

The Williamsville District covers many of the sparsely-populated areas of the County and has the greatest land area of any of the Districts. It covers most of the northeastern part of the County and extends south towards Douthat State Park on Route 629. Most of the land along Route 629 is agricultural with some residential growth mixed in near Williamsville on Route 609.

Cedar Creek District

On the other hand, the Cedar Creek District is one of the smaller magisterial districts in land area. Located in the County's southwestern quadrant, Cedar Creek encompasses such villages as Mitchelltown, Bacova Junction, and a portion of Hot Springs. A large percentage of this district consists of wildlife management areas. Lake Moomaw is found in the southern portion of the Cedar Creek District.

Valley Springs District

The smallest of the Magisterial Districts, Valley Springs District, contains the villages of Ashwood, Carlover, and Healing Springs along the Route 220 corridor. Sewer lines were recently installed along this corridor that leads drivers southward down towards the City of Covington (located in Alleghany County)

Millboro District

The Millboro District is home to both Millboro and Millboro Springs. The primary concentration of land zoned M-1 (Industrial) in the County was found here in the Millboro District in the Millboro Industrial Park. However, in 1983 the park was apparently rezoned to B-2, and the County should consider returning it to its original designation in order to attract suitable industry for economic development purposes.

Land Use Plan

Land use planning entails the designation of local areas for various activities, such as business, industry, housing, conservation, and recreation. These land uses are based on the suitability of those parcels for specific activities and on the community needs. Suitability is usually determined by the characteristics of the land and of the environment, available infrastructure, and existing adjacent uses. It is the responsibility of the community as a whole – not just the elected officials – to decide which areas of the County should be conserved and which areas should be developed.

Since development can either enhance or detract from a community, land use policies must reflect local cultural, natural, and historic attributes. They must also provide for the fair and equitable treatment of all landowners.

The following land use plan is based on the cumulative analysis of each of the preceding sections. It is a combination of present land use patterns, landowner's initiative, and the County's goals and objectives for future land use. The Plan strives to establish a guide or blueprint for possible future development that will result in cohesive and logical growth. It is also designed to be flexible enough to accommodate changing conditions.

Bath County's Future Land Use Plan should be based on community principles. The County has long been recognized as a major resort center and tourism destination in the Alleghany Mountains with beautiful open land and unique recreational outlets. The most desirable developments would be those that complement the County's natural setting. Random and scattered growth should be discouraged in favor of a more compact and sustainable pattern promoting connectivity between places where people live, work, and play.

Types of Development

Industrial Development

The County is genuinely concerned about stabilizing and expanding its employment base, and acknowledges that locating certain industries here in Bath may indeed be beneficial to the people of Bath County. Because of the County's desire to preserve the rural character that makes it so popular with tourists and residents alike, it is recommended that potential industrial development sites be placed on relatively small pads in the vicinity of one another. Such siting lends itself well to campus or "park-like" settings and encourages the centralized location of new industry within the County.

It is doubtful that industries requiring extensive air or water discharges could be accommodated in Bath County, nor would they be appreciated. Because of the delicacy of local ground and surface water, potential industries handling or storing hazardous materials should be stringently evaluated and discouraged in many locations due to karst and watershed issues. In addition, proper buffers between new industries, utilities, and existing residential and agricultural uses are recommended to preserve scenic vistas.

Commercial Development

While the majority of our citizens' retail needs can be met by patronizing Bath's current commercial sector, many citizens would very much like to see an expanded retail base. It is important to residents, however, that increased commercial opportunities do not bring with them excessive signage, large expanses of open parking, little or no landscaping, poor pedestrian access, or building design that is inconsistent with the flavor of the County.

Guidelines for future commercial growth will encourage concentrated development in existing business districts (and within “village” areas) and gradual growth at the edges of such areas. The County should consider ordinances that better address the positioning and buffering of parking areas, and encourage tasteful, coordinated building design and signage. Commercial mixed-use areas should be encouraged in those areas where a healthy balance between neighborhood vitality and neighborhood cohesion exist within the County’s villages.

Residential Development

Key factors for sustainability in many of Bath County’s existing neighborhoods, particularly in the communities of Warm Springs and Hot Springs, include the continuity of style and scale among homes, effective use of landscape plantings and established trees, as well as obvious pride of homeownership.

Bath County’s Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances must ensure that future residential development is sensitive not only to the quality of life for our current residents, but for future residents as well. In addition, it is necessary that they preserve the character and productivity of Bath County’s rural/cultural landscape.

Although additional development is anticipated, it should be carefully planned to correspond with the current and future placement of utilities and infrastructure. In order to prevent “leapfrogging,” a term used to describe haphazard development, the County should guide the placement of new growth areas so that they are expansions or extensions of existing subdivisions.

Densities of new residential developments will be determined by many factors including: the Future Land Use Plan, zoning, presence of utilities and roads, environmental factors, such as steep slopes,

proximity to floodplain, presence of karst topography, soil suitability, and public input/involvement.

Mixed Use

Bath County, with its small town feel and limited development sites could allow and encourage mixed uses in its growth areas. Mixed use zoning will allow for a combination of two (2) or more uses within the same structure, building, or land parcel. One of the biggest benefits of mixed use zoning is that it allows for great connectivity and shortens the distances among the areas where people live, work, and play.

Other key advantages for mixed-use development include: 1) giving citizens more options for developing their property, 2) enabling a greater variety of housing options (such as second-floor apartments), 3) allowing residents greater proximity to commercial conveniences, and 4) encouraging the density that makes utility provision feasible. A mixture of uses also can fit well with the County’s tradition of development being small scale, unique, and site specific.

Land Use Challenges

Steep terrain and the high proportion of public ownership leave relatively little of the land area in Bath County feasible to develop. Thus it is in the county’s interest to ensure that suitable sites are developed as efficiently and carefully as possible, in ways that serve the long-term needs of county citizens.

The greatest peril, with potentially troublesome economic repercussions, would be to allow development that degrades the environment and reduces the county’s attractiveness for tourism and recreation. A more subtle risk would be using land so inefficiently that the provision of utilities becomes infeasible or too expensive and long-term growth is stunted.

Another facet of Bath's current land use is the acceleration of high-end second-home development in recreational settings. This contrasts with the continuing need for residential options that local citizens can afford. Increasing land prices and property tax values will make it increasingly difficult to balance these interests.

Agriculture and forestry management are the County's traditional land uses. As the County starts to experience more growth, there may be less understanding of these mainstays of the rural economy. These important uses will need to be protected and supported. Immediate land use challenges facing Bath County include the following:

- To integrate the Homestead Preserve project within the context of the County
- To be ready for additional development (that may not have the same high quality of resources and standards)
- To balance varied needs of citizens, especially as more part-time residents are added to the community
- To protect the County's significant natural and historic resources
- To support the county's traditional rural lifestyle, including productive farming and forestry
- To develop 'smart growth' strategies to make the best use of developable land, while protecting resources and providing residential options for all citizens
- To address issues of affordable housing and employment as they relate to land use
- To promote connectivity among the places where people live, work, and play

Bath County's Growth Areas

1. The Homestead Preserve was recently approved as a subdivision community with large acreage lots. The development comprises Parcels 6, 7, 8, 9, 12A, B, & C, 13, and 14, located in Hot Springs and Warm Springs. At the time of this publication all but 12C, 13, and 14 have been approved, platted, and are available for sale. The remaining parcels will continue with this process pending an agreement with the Warm Springs Sanitation Commission.
2. The Route 220 Corridor is the most heavily traveled highway in Bath County. Tourists travel this route to view scenic attractions such as the Warm Springs Pools, the historic Bath County Courthouse, and enjoy staying at the world-famous Homestead resort. With the communities of Warm Springs, Mitchelltown, Hot Springs, Ashwood, Healing Springs, and Carlover situated along Rt. 220, growth is occurring. This corridor has long been home to many Bath County residents and businesses. It will continue to thrive for years to come.
3. The Route 39 Corridor, west of Warm Springs, including the community of West Warm Springs is both growth area and a tourism corridor. The area follows Route 39 almost to the intersection of Route 687 (Jackson River Turnpike). This portion of Route 39 is frequently traveled by tourists, as it serves as a route to Lake Moomaw and the Back Creek Recreation area near Mountain Grove. The County has utilized grant funding to successfully revitalize low-income housing and install public water and sewer to homes in the West Warm Springs community.
4. The community of Bacova is located primarily along Route 687 and has

facilities in the old Bacova Guild Complex that are suitable for light industry and small manufacturing. The area is primarily zoned Residential with the exception of the Guild and the newly refurbished Bacova Gallery located in the old church. Residents of Bacova benefited from improved sewer services provided by the Bath County Service Authority.

5. Further down Route 687, south of the Lower Cascades Golf Course and north of Cedar Creek Mobile Home Park, lies the smallest growth area in the County. The property between the two above mentioned points has few topographical constraints which allows for proper wastewater system installation and excellent home sites. A new wastewater treatment plant was completed in 2007 for the trailer park and can be expanded to support future home sites.
6. Heading eastward on Route 39 are the Millboro Springs and Millboro growth areas. These areas, situated along Routes 39 and 42, as well as Routes 633, 635, and a portion of 678, could serve more local needs for housing and employment. Millboro is home to the Bath County Industrial Park and serves as headquarters to the Millboro Area Rescue Squad.
7. The County may also consider allowing the creation of Village Nodes or Rural Centers in areas such as Mountain Grove, Burnsville, Williamsville, and other communities to curb sprawl and promote connectivity and rural amenities.

Rural Preservation Tools

Rural Land Protection Goals

Clear goals are an obvious but often overlooked foundation to an effective plan. Expressly stated goals are more likely to lead to action. They also can help the

locality integrate its various and sometimes competing goals into a comprehensive vision.

There are many different aspects of “rural protection”. Some examples include protecting natural resources, preserving rural character, preserving scenic quality, and maintaining viable agricultural and forestry sectors. Each focus requires a different approach.

However, they all have in common the fact that appropriate land use is the most effective way to protect these features. Keeping a landscape rural therefore rests in large part on traditional uses staying viable for landowners.

Rural Land Protection Programs

With a clear goal, specific programs or initiatives can be targeted to address agricultural issues and farmland protection. Some counties have appointed an Agricultural Task Force to research local challenges and develop recommendations. This can lead to such steps as evaluating tax policy, reviewing zoning regulations, or establishing a purchase of development rights program.

Defined Growth Areas

Simply put, a successful rural protection program depends on accommodating population growth in a way that avoids sprawl. The principle of “growing in, not out” means protecting the integrity of the rural areas, while building communities that offer a high quality of life.

Defined growth areas are a way that counties can get serious about reducing sprawl. The County aligns both its development regulations and its capital improvements program toward guiding new development into these defined growth areas. The most basic principle is to limit new infrastructure to growth area

boundaries. This removes the density potential of parcels outside of the growth areas and increases demand for the land that the locality is prepared to serve with utilities.

Containing the geographic scope of infrastructure does much to contain costs. Unless a government makes the political and financial investment in its growth areas, it will be unlikely to draw development away from a sprawling pattern.

The County can and should specify that water and sewer connections be limited to designated areas (growth areas and/or service districts which often coincide). It even can prevent connections to utility lines that cross properties outside the district.

The County could also add stipulations regarding annexation requirements (affordable housing, open space, etc.) for areas that want to be considered for growth and provision of services.

Potential detriments to Growth Areas involve artificial escalation of property values in targeted areas while prices fall elsewhere. Therefore, boundaries must be determined through public involvement and foresight, not arbitrary decision-making.

Keys to Successful Growth Areas:

- Water and sewer limited to designated boundaries
- Zoned for density
- Priority for infrastructure funding
- Detailed plan for growth (i.e., streetscapes, parks, roads)
- Zoning land to achieve neighborhood amenities rather than just more density
- Setting and maintaining those limits for new development

Green Infrastructure and Rural Preserve

The same goal of accommodating population while protecting rural assets also can be approached from the opposite angle. A 'green infrastructure' approach looks first at identifying important natural resources and protecting the integrity of these areas from development. In contrast to the 'hard' boundary of a growth area, this could result in fingers of greenways integrated with parks and other open space within fully developed areas.

In rural areas, sites such as riparian corridors, surface water recharge areas, farming enclaves, and so on might be targeted for protection. This would provide a reserve of farmland and forest for future needs. In some cases, there could even be a rural preserve.

The advantage of this approach is that it is strategic, as it focuses on protecting those areas that have the most environmental value. The benefits are widespread, since citizens even in more densely populated sections can enjoy access to open space, and the community can better address issues like stormwater management, flooding, and water quality. This approach also can incorporate watersheds, ridgelines, and other natural boundaries into site planning.

Land Use Taxation

Land use taxation, lowering the tax burden on land kept in rural uses, is the most basic incentive a locality can offer landowners to keep their land undeveloped. Bath County recently adopted Land Use Taxation as a means to mitigate the impact of rising land values and rising assessments in the rural areas of the County. The state allows localities to tax landowners based on how the land is used, rather than on its market value. Counties can designate any or all of four categories for the program: agricultural, forestal, horticultural, or open

space lands. The Commissioner of Revenue sets a use value rate for each category, based on the land's productive earning power. The County also can set differing standards for eligibility.

Whenever land is pulled out of the land use taxation program and developed, a 'roll-back' tax is collected. Some localities designate this revenue for farmland protection or related programs.

Zoning and Subdivision Regulations

Local land use regulations are the primary determinant of the pattern of development. Zoning regulations specify what uses are allowed where, while subdivision regulations control how parcels can be subdivided. Zoning, however, is not a reliable protection tool. It is only temporary, since individual parcels can be rezoned to a different category and the regulations of a district can be changed. Zoning therefore tends to reflect rather than shape development pressure.

Any zoning district can be evaluated along the following major considerations: 1) density level (how many dwelling units per acre), 2) permitted uses, 3) protection of environmental features (such as prohibition of development in floodplains), 4) timing of subdivisions, and 5) design of subdivisions. Development on the ground will reflect the answers to these basic questions. Below are some of the zoning measures that are typically used to try to control residential development in rural areas:

Large-Lot Zoning – Large-lot zoning sets a high minimum lot size that results in large house sites served by individual well and septic. Minimum lot sizes can range from 5 to 10 to 20 acres or more. Some localities even exempt from subdivision regulations 'large-lot divisions,' those in which all resulting parcels meet an even higher size threshold. This serves as an incentive to create artificially large residential lots.

While originally touted as an effective tool for preserving land, in practice, large-lot zoning has several drawbacks. It leads to more sprawl by spreading the same population over a far greater area, increasing the cost of housing and would limit the County's future options for utilities. It does not protect farmland, since it brings residents into agricultural areas, drives up the cost of land, and adds to potential conflicts over nuisances and roads. In particular, large-lot exemptions, if widely used, result in the development of significant land area for only a few households.

Maximum Lot Size – The opposite of a minimum lot size, a maximum lot size provision limits the size of lots in order to reduce consumption of prime farmland. As with clustering, the overall density is still based on total parcel size.

Agricultural Zoning – Too often perceived as a catch-all district for undeveloped ('vacant') areas, general agriculture districts typically allow varying degrees of residential development by right, as well as other uses by permit. As development pressure builds, piecemeal residential subdivision can compromise rural land uses and character. Facing this dilemma, counties often react either by drastically tightening the regulations in agricultural districts or by going in the other direction and rezoning some areas out of agriculture.

Exclusive Agricultural Zoning – A locality can use different tiers of agricultural zoning. In exclusive agricultural districts, the only uses allowed are those involving or compatible with farming or forestry. The allowed density is typically lower as well. In some cases, standards are set to accommodate intensive agricultural operations such as poultry houses.

'Agricultural Compatible' Uses – As farmers face increased financial

uncertainty and pressures, they may need expanded options of how they can use their property in order to stay on the land. Some counties are responding by seeking ways to broaden the nonresidential uses allowed. These efforts typically set criteria that address compatibility issues rather than trying to designate specific uses.

Sliding Scale Zoning – Rather than applying the same density standard everywhere, sliding scale zoning allows smaller parcels to be subdivided at a greater density than larger parcels. The intent is to allow most owners to divide at least once, but to reduce the overall potential development density of larger parcels. This strategy may discourage wholesale subdivision of large tracts, because of the diminishing returns as tract size increases.

Time-Release Subdivisions – A locality can limit how often a landowner can divide a parcel. The intent is to allow farmers a periodic flow of income from selling off pieces of their main asset, yet remove the incentive for land speculation. Developers will not be as interested in the land if they cannot quickly recoup their land purchase and development costs. This technique is employed in Augusta, Rockingham, and Shenandoah counties, the three largely agricultural-dominated counties in the region.

Agricultural/Forestal Districts

An Agricultural and Forestal District (“AFD”) is a voluntary agreement between farmers and the local government to maintain land in farming for a set term. When a district is established, landowners agree not to convert their farm or forest land to development for a period of between 4 and 10 years. In return, the locality offers automatic land use taxation rates, protection from nuisance suits, and consideration of

the district in local land-use planning. The Commonwealth also agrees not to take actions or make infrastructure investments that will place increased pressure on landowners to convert land. It is possible to stipulate that no hook ups are allowed on utility lines passing through districts.

“AFD’s” are stronger than zoning regulations. Landowners gain strength in numbers with their neighbors, making it known to all that this land, at least for the near term, is reserved for farming and forestry management. It is, however, still only a temporary measure. As the development pressure increases, district participation tends to drop. Basic criteria for AFD’s are as follows: 1) they are initiated by landowners voluntarily; 2) a district must have a core of at least 200 acres in one or more contiguous parcels, 3) parcels can be included in the district if their closest boundary is within one mile of the core, or if they are adjacent to a parcel that is in the district, and 4) part or all of a parcel can be enrolled.

The use of AFD’s districts has grown recently. Of the 45 AFD’s in the 11-county Shenandoah Valley region in 2002, 38 had been formed since 1990. Increasingly, both farmers and localities realize the need to react to development pressure. However, as growth pressures have intensified, particularly in the Northern Valley, there has been an interesting trend. As the terms expire, significant amounts of acreage have been withdrawn from long-standing AFD’s.

A potential drawback of AFD’s is the diminishment of the tax base, making less money available to provide services and infrastructure upgrades. Because so much of Bath’s land could potentially qualify for these tax breaks, establishing districts could mean a significant loss of revenue. Figures would have to be carefully analyzed to see if this would be a wise decision financially for County coffers.

Conservation Easements

Purchase of Development Rights (PDR's)

A conservation easement is a voluntary agreement in which a landowner permanently limits the uses of the land while maintaining all other rights of ownership. The restrictions are binding on all future landowners.

Most conservation easements restrict uses that would destroy natural, scenic, or historic values while allowing traditional uses such as farming and forestry. Typically, conservation easements limit the number of parcels and the number of dwellings. Other common provisions are buffers to protect streams or views. Each easement is tailored to the site and to the owner's wishes. The terms are negotiated between the landowner and the easement holder who agrees to uphold the terms of the easement.

There are many types of conservation easements. Agricultural or open space easements protect farm or forest land, typically by entire parcel. Riparian easements cover just the areas adjacent to streams and have provisions relating to protecting water quality and wildlife habitat. Scenic easements contain provisions aimed at protecting the view from or of a certain location (such as the Skyline Drive). They may specify building envelopes. Historic easements are written to protect specified historic features.

Most easements are donated (and can have significant tax benefits). To qualify for a federal charitable deduction, an easement must be permanent and must be held by a qualified entity. The Virginia Outdoors Foundation holds most easements in the state. Local land trusts, such as Valley Conservation Council, are another option. In addition, easements can offer a range of state tax relief and estate planning benefits. Easements also can be purchased (as described below under Purchase of Development Rights). Another option is a combination of donation and purchase.

A purchase of development rights (PDR) program enables a locality to purchase conservation easements. The protection is the same as with a donated conservation easement and the easement is still voluntary. In fact, an easement can be a combination of purchase and donation.

PDR programs offer key advantages to both the landowner and the community. The landowner gets to keep the land, and he also receives financial compensation for it. For some landowners, purchase can make a conservation easement a viable economic option. For communities, a PDR program can give the community a tool for guiding growth, reducing long-term infrastructure costs, and protecting particular sites. Studies estimate that localities can achieve significant long-term cost savings through buying conservation easements in the present and avoiding significant service costs later. About half a dozen localities in Virginia have established a PDR program.

Local PDR programs typically accept applications from interested landowners once or twice a year. They develop a set of standards and criteria for ranking the proposed parcels. After that, they negotiate and make purchases based on how much funding the program has. Some programs have a set price per development right. Others use appraisals as a basis for setting a price.

A local PDR program can be funded through a variety of mechanisms. These include a line item in the local budget, general revenue, roll-back taxes, a specific local tax, grants, and dedication of a particular windfall. Some of the most effective programs in the nation structure a PDR financing package that includes borrowing money at an advantageous interest rate and making payments to farmers on an installment plan.

Drawbacks of this program can include the need to identify environmentally sensitive areas and establishing a graduated priority, the disparity between those who wish to be included in the sending area rather than the receiving area, potential over commitment to infrastructure improvements, and monitoring trading to prevent duplicity.

Clustering

In open space design development (often referred to as “clustering”) the density, or number of lots, is based on the entire parcel, but the lots are sited on just a portion of the parcel. The remainder is set aside as ‘open space.’ For example, a 100-acre parcel at a base density of 1 dwelling unit per 5 acres and a minimum lot size of 1½ acres would result in 30 developed acres (putting 20 residences on 1½ acre lots) and leaving an undeveloped residual of 70 acres. The residual acreage can be available for continued farming or other rural use or it can be incorporated into the development as common open space.

Localities can set different standards for different purposes. For example, in agricultural zones, the emphasis might be on maintaining a sizeable contiguous area to enable continued farming or forestry. For example, some counties require that anywhere between 70-85% of the parcel be reserved in this way. Other ordinances may specify that environmental features be protected. Also, provisions might address the suitability of the reserved open space to ensure that it is usable and appealing for common open space. All of these strategies recognize that the open space and key vistas on-site should be ‘designed’ in their own right, to serve specific purposes, rather than merely be the ‘leftover’ portion after house sites are chosen.

One variation for open space design involves instituting minimum open space requirements. Some communities have varying minimum open space requirements

for various zoning districts, including multi-family and commercial. In Bath County, the most appropriate application of cluster development standards would be for village nodes, or other more established communities that would benefit from housing and amenities while maintaining rural character and open space.

The benefits of clustering include the opportunity to protect natural areas, scenic views, and other assets during development as well as somewhat reduced land consumption.

When designating areas for potential cluster developments, it is important to avoid siting issues, such as creating dense, impervious surfaces that may impact water quality, and assuring that topography is stable enough to support the weight of such projects.

Regulating Open Space Design

- Is the open space design optional or required? Optional programs may need to offer incentives, such as density bonuses or streamlined review process, to encourage its use.
- In what areas is it offered? Some ordinances set different open space requirements for different zoning districts.
- What percentage of open space is required? Different amounts may be required in different districts. Some counties have minimum open space requirements for residential, commercial, multifamily, and rural.
- How many units can be clustered? Too many units can overwhelm a site and raise groundwater concerns.
- What are the standards for the open space? In agricultural

areas, staying below the ridge line for protection of steep slopes and scenic views can be important. In residential areas, standards can ensure that open space is usable for active or passive recreation.

Historic Preservation

Preserving historic resources is vital to maintaining the extensive cultural heritage in the County. The three main steps to historic preservation are 1) identification, 2) recognition, and 3) protection. Identification means inventorying the historic resources in a community and understanding their importance. Designations provide recognition for particularly significant sites, but do not protect them. Protection comes only through local preservation ordinances or through a property owner placing a historic easement.

What Localities Can Do

- Have complete and thorough surveys of architectural and archaeological resources
- Link survey data to the planning process (i.e. - mapping properties or districts that are on or eligible for the National Register)
- Consider nominating historic districts
- Designate and protect publicly owned historic properties
- Consider enacting a local historic preservation ordinance
- Seek Certified Local Government status

Historic Surveys – Not all properties that would qualify for a historic listing have been identified or nominated. In fact, the assessment of historic resources is far from complete in most counties throughout the Valley region. Many counties have some

level of survey, but in some cases they may not be as thorough or complete as would be necessary. The Virginia Department of Historic Resources (VDHR) ranks how well each locality has assessed its architectural and archaeological resources.

Historic Designations – The National Register of Historic Places and the Virginia Landmarks Register recognize properties of significant historic importance and integrity. The National Register is the official list of structures, sites, objects, and districts that embody the “historical and cultural foundations of the nation.” The state uses the same nominating process and criteria for its counterpart, the Virginia Landmarks Register. These designations convey information, confer honor, and heighten awareness, but they do not restrict property owners from utilizing their property in any particular way.

Designation raises understanding of the historical significance of a particular site, enhancing the likelihood that it will be maintained and protected. Designation also can potentially qualify owners for technical assistance and both federal and state tax incentives to restore listed properties.

Districts can be listed on the National Register. National Register historic districts are collections of buildings or sites. These can range from downtown commercial areas, older neighborhoods, or even agricultural complexes. Historic districts also can follow a theme, such as military or education. Listing as a National Historic Landmark is an even higher level of distinction, given only to properties of historical significance to the nation.

Historic Preservation Ordinances – Localities can adopt regulations to protect the integrity of their historic areas. Most historic district ordinances seek to ensure that any changes (new construction, additions, and substantial repairs) are compatible with historic character. Typically,

this is done through an overlay district, with proposals evaluated by an Architectural Review Board (ARB).

Historic Easements – Historic easements offer protection that the characteristics that give a property its historical integrity will not be destroyed. The Virginia Board of Historic Resources holds or enforces these easements. As with conservation easements, the underlying ownership does not change. Easements are commonly owned by non-profit groups.

Certified Local Governments – Localities that qualify as Certified Local Governments (CLG's) are eligible for grants and training from the state. The grants can be used to survey architectural and archaeological resources, prepare nominations to the National Register of Historic Places, create preservation planning documents and programs, create public education programs, and rehabilitate publicly owned buildings listed on the National Register. One of the prerequisites is having a local historic district ordinance.

Such an ordinance is the only development restriction placed on properties within the district, and may be crafted to be relatively lenient or strict. Bath County should look at adopting regulations that allow the government and citizens to take advantage of tax credits and other incentives to protect historic resources, but also ensure that property rights are not unduly restricted or that bureaucratic layers don't become too overwhelming.

Protecting Scenic Resources

Preserving scenic views and vistas is particularly important for Bath County, because its pleasing scenery is one of its most distinguishing features. The Alleghany Mountains are a national attraction and derive their popularity from spectacular views. Tourism and nature-based leisure draw on the beauty of the region and have

significant economic impact. Furthermore, our residents value the beauty of their natural surroundings on a daily basis.

Keys to Preserving Scenic Views

- Maintain farmland and forestland
- Control signage
- Develop corridor plans and overlay districts
- Minimize the visibility of wireless communication towers and other tall structures
- Use scenic designations (like Virginia Byways and Virginia Scenic Rivers)
- Site rural buildings to their context
- Use viewshed easements around particularly important sites
- Limit ridgeline development
- Use open space development designs
- Set standards for outdoor lighting

Scenic Road Designation – The Scenic Highways and Virginia Byways Act authorizes the Commonwealth Transportation Board to recognize specific roads for their outstanding features. A Scenic Highway is defined as a road that is built within a protected corridor. "Virginia Byways" are existing roads with significant aesthetic and cultural values, leading to or lying within an area of historical, natural, or recreational significance.

Designation does not bring any state regulation and does not prevent future road improvements. Any land-use controls are decided upon and applied at the local level. Virginia Byway status encourages local governments to adopt land use measures to protect these resources for the enjoyment of future generations.

To qualify for Virginia Byway status, a road must substantially meet these criteria: 1) The route provides important scenic values and experiences; 2) There is a diversity of experiences, as in the transformation from one landscape to another; 3) The route links together or provides access to significant scenic, scientific, historic, or recreational points; 4) The route provides opportunity to leave high-speed routes for variety and leisure in motoring; 5) Landscape controls or monitoring along the route is feasible; and 6) The route affords opportunities for the provision of features which will enhance the motorist's enjoyment of the byway.

Many Virginia Byways pass through multiple localities. Some counties or citizen groups make concerted efforts to designate qualified scenic roads. In this way, byway designations can build on tourism or historical themes and can be coordinated with other county programs.

Other Designations – Localities also can develop designations that suit their particular resources. For example, Alleghany County is developing the Jackson River Scenic Trail. The Board of Supervisors voted to ban all motorized vehicular traffic from this future hiking and biking trail. The county established a committee to address development of the trail and a sister committee to concentrate on use of the Jackson River itself.

Virginia Scenic Rivers Program – The Virginia Scenic Rivers Program identifies, recognizes, and provides a level of protection to rivers or streams whose scenic beauty, historic importance, recreational significance, and natural characteristics make them important resources.

Scenic Rivers must meet a rigorous assessment based on 11 criteria. Typically, a local government requests an evaluation. If a segment is deemed eligible, a local

legislator must sponsor designation by the General Assembly. Specifically, Back Creek, Jackson River and Cowpasture River can be pursued as all have been identified as potentially eligible for designation.

As with Scenic Roads, we must take care to ensure that a fair balance is struck between property rights and resource protection.

Ridgeline Protection – The mountainous topography of the region means that a panoramic view can be destroyed even by small amounts of development above the ridgeline. Both Albemarle and Clarke Counties have attempted to address this aspect of development. Within the region, Botetourt County is also looking at how to protect scenic views. Both must ensure that development on ridge tops is compatible with the environmental features of the land and does not diminish natural and scenic values.

Cell Towers and Other Structures – Modern wireless communications require telecommunications facilities. However, their height makes these structures highly visible. In order to provide full service coverage, companies need to disperse these facilities throughout the rural areas of the County. The FAA requires that structures greater than 200 feet in height must be lighted, prompting many localities to require that all new structures be no taller than 199 feet. Localities may regulate dozens of factors and issues related to the construction of wireless communication towers in terms of safety and siting. Many include additional standards to mitigate the visual impact of the towers.

Just as no one twenty years ago could have predicted the proliferation of cell towers, there will be additional challenges to rural landscapes in the future, as shown by the recent large-scale wind tower proposal in Highland County. Ordinances that rely only on listing allowable and prohibited uses

may be more vulnerable to such unanticipated developments. Providing a statement of intent for each zoning district within the County's updated land use regulations, including protecting visual quality, is useful in such cases.

Prevention of Light Pollution –

Outdoor lighting can turn into light pollution when light spills onto adjoining properties or upward into the night sky. The potential effect is that it becomes a nuisance to the neighbors and, cumulatively, a diminution of the darkness in the community. Seeing the stars in the night sky can be significantly

damaged by excessive or ill-considered lighting.

One solution is to shield outdoor lighting and direct it downward so that it illuminates only the intended areas. The International Dark Sky Association (IDSA) has a wealth of resources, including fact sheets, a model lighting ordinance, and specific information on appropriate light fixtures and where to find them. Many localities in the state and throughout the nation regulate outdoor lighting to help ensure that all residents can enjoy the night skies.

LAND USE GOALS

1. New growth should compliment the County's natural, historical, and cultural setting.
2. Encourage the location of any new development to correspond with existing or planned public utilities, and create standards for more localized systems when expansion to a designated, appropriate area would be cost prohibitive.
3. Ensure that effective land use planning is kept in balance with the freedom and rights of individual landowners.
4. Encourage "Village Type" growth models for business and residential areas.

OBJECTIVES

- a. Locate potential industrial development sites on relatively small pads in the vicinity of one another, so as to centralize development in "industrial parks."
- b. Stringently evaluate the effect of proposed industrial locations upon local air quality, as well as ground and surface waters.
- c. Consider alternative energy sources (i.e.- wind, solar) at an appropriate scale and location, for use within the local community.
- d. Preserve and protect the water quality, scenic beauty, and natural character of the Cowpasture and Jackson Rivers, as well as Back Creek, by using established Best Management Practices.
- e. Discourage strip development along Routes 220, 39, and 42, as well as other highways.
- f. Avoid developing on steep slopes (greater than 25%) due to potential problems with erosion, sedimentation, and water pollution.
- g. Avoid development within areas characterized by Karst topography so as to minimize structural instability and groundwater pollution.
- h. Discourage or carefully regulate development of land areas within the 100-year floodplain of any river or stream.
- i. Encourage commercial development in existing business districts and gradual growth at the peripheries of such areas.
- j. Develop and support the incentives and techniques described herein to preserve Bath County's rural and historic character (conservation easements, land use taxation, historical landmarks designation, Virginia Byway designation, and cluster development).

- k. Consider revising the current Zoning Ordinance to include the following:
 - 1) Strengthen buffering requirements between zoning districts where such would enhance use compatibility.
 - 2) Stipulate that manufactured homes, where permitted in agriculture districts, shall be subject to development standards that are equivalent to those applicable to conventional, site-built single family dwellings within the same or equivalent zoning district.
 - 3) Adopt a set of comprehensive telecommunications, wind, and solar facilities siting guidelines.
 - 4) Include model ordinances that will protect water quality, ridgetops, viewsheds, dark skies, and soil quality.
 - 5) Consider changing the current animal husbandry regulations to allow for permitted uses in Agricultural zones with a specified acreage requirement and as a Conditional Use in Residential zones with a more substantial acreage requirement.
 - 6) Introduce a new zoning classification of Mixed Use that could be utilized in downtown Hot Springs and other areas where combining commercial and residential uses would be appropriate, and implement corresponding standards, uses, and other guidelines.
 - 7) Consider allowing construction of “mother-in-law” cottages as a conditional use in appropriate zones to help with goals of elder care, rental opportunities, and affordable housing.
- 8) Consider adopting regulations regarding the creation and management of historic districts.
- m. Planned community growth areas in Bath County include the following:
 - (1) Route 220 Corridor (north of Warm Springs south to Carlover)
 - (2) Route 39 West (including Warm Springs)
 - (3) Bacova
 - (4) Cedar Creek (north of trailer park, south of Cascades)
 - (5) Millboro Springs and Millboro
- n. In the remainder of the County, consider allowing low-density occupancy uses upon review.
- o. Discourage “Big Box Type” commercial buildings and place limit the total square footage allowed in any one building in certain zones.

IMPLEMENTATION OF SMART GROWTH PRINCIPLES

In recent years, many communities have recognized the benefits of Smart Growth Principles (i.e. – environmentally sensitive land development with the goals of minimizing dependence on auto transportation, reducing air pollution, and making efficient infrastructure investments.)

Community workshops were held with the assistance of the staff and the CSPDC to solicit input from the public to hear what Smart Growth objectives were the most desirable in Bath County. To summarize that public comment, the responses with highest scores are listed in the tables below. These objectives are recommendations to the community and should be included in any subsequent revisions to the Land Use Regulations. An explanation of each Smart Growth Principle precedes the list of recommended strategies.

Smart Growth Principle #1 – Mix Land Uses

Mixed land uses are a critical component of Smart Growth. To elaborate, towns and cities built in the early 20th Century were vibrant communities because their integrated land uses provided residents easy access to work, school, shopping, and recreation areas – often by walking or biking. Improved environmental conditions and changes in business have now reduced much of the need to separate land uses.

Integrated, mixed land uses can not only serve to reinvigorate communities, but can also help to reduce dependency on cars, roads, and parking, and help to reduce pollution of air, rivers, streams, and lakes caused by separation of land uses. Vibrant, traditional “village cores” that provide convenient access to work, schools, shopping, and recreation have proven to be successful in attracting investors. The 10 tables below list strategies that could be implemented to achieve each principle (These strategies are listed in *descending* order of the number of votes received at the public forum - highest vote-getter listed first.)

1. Mix Land Uses

* Seek incentives through state funds to encourage residents to live near where they work.

* Provide examples of mixed-use development at scales that are appropriate to your community.

* Adopt smart growth codes to parallel existing conventional development codes.

* Encourage the redevelopment of single uses into mixed-use developments.

* Reward communities that create a balance between jobs and housing.

* Provide incentives for ground-floor retail and upper-level residential uses in existing and future development.

* Locate neighborhood stores in residential areas.

* Use innovative zoning tools to encourage mixed-use communities and buildings.

Smart Growth Principle #2 – Utilize Compact Building Design

The County can encourage that new developments should leave more open space by using smaller building footprints, reducing minimum lot size, compacting utility lines, and increasing densities in and around areas where you want the public to go.

2. Utilize Compact Building Design

* Use public meetings about development options to educate community members on density and compact building options.

* Ensure ready access to open space in compactly developed places.

* Incorporate model state-level design standards and codes to encourage compact building design that can be adopted by local communities.

* Adopt a cottage housing development zoning district.

* Use compact development coupled with onsite best management practices to improve environmental outcomes.

* Use traditional neighborhood design.

* Encourage developers to reduce off-street surface parking.

* Use density bonuses to encourage developers to increase floor-to-area ratio (FAR).

* Employ a design review board to ensure that compact buildings reflect desirable design standards.

Smart Growth Principle #3 – Create a Range of Housing Opportunities and Choices

Zoning and Subdivision codes can be updated to allow for a broader range of choices in housing type and quantity of units by integrating single and multi-family uses.

3. Create a Range of Housing Opportunities and Choices

* Streamline the development review process when units include affordable housing.

* Revise zoning and building codes to permit a wider variety of housing types.

* Implement a program to identify and dispose of or renovate vacant and abandoned buildings.

* Adopt special rehabilitation building codes to regulate the renovation of existing structures.

* Enact an inclusionary zoning ordinance for new housing developments.

* Adopt property tax exemption programs for mixed-income developments and low-income homeowners.

* Plan and zone for affordable and manufactured housing development in rural areas.

* Integrate smart growth and housing programs.

* Educate realtors, lenders, and home buyers on the use of resource-efficient mortgages and housing design.

* Create a regional program to encourage all communities to include a fair share of affordable and moderate-range housing.

Smart Growth Principle #4 – Create Walkable Communities

Prior to WWII neighborhood design focused on pedestrians. Sidewalks with destinations were important. After WWII the focus has been on the automobile. Sidewalks are no longer common infrastructure and often are seen as expensive and unused.

To make communities walkable again, we need to create pedestrian-friendly features that promote sidewalk use. Examples include: mix of densities, mix of

uses, compact street intersections with crosswalks, neighborhoods scaled to people, narrower streets, traffic-calming, on-street parking, and pathways in parking lots.

Deterrents to pedestrians include: wide streets, few crosswalks, sidewalks to nowhere, long blocks, and limited pedestrian infrastructure such as sidewalks, median strips, and traffic-calming features.

Conventional development design disincentives to pedestrians include: setbacks, large minimum lot requirements, indirect street routes, cul-de-sacs, sidewalks to nowhere, long blocks, and lack of front porches.

Business development disincentives to pedestrians include: large parking lots with no walking paths or crossings. Placing parking behind buildings or instituting maximum (rather than minimum) parking and setback requirements are potential solutions to these challenges.

4. Create Walkable Communities

- * Use trees and other green infrastructure to provide shelter, beauty, heat reduction, and separation from automobile traffic.
- * Beautify and maintain existing and future walkways.
- * Provide Americans with disabilities easy access to sidewalks, streets, parks, and other public and private services.
- * Connect walkways, parking lots, greenways, and developments.
- * Use visual cues and design elements to indicate pedestrian rights of way and minimize conflicts.
- * Adopt design standards for sidewalks.
- * Require traffic-calming techniques where traffic speed through residential neighborhoods is excessive.

* Provide grants or other financial assistance to local communities to retrofit existing streets and sidewalks to promote more walkable communities.

* Require building design that makes commercial areas more walkable.

* Identify economic opportunities that stimulate pedestrian activity.

* Concentrate critical services near homes, jobs, and transit.

* Develop a pedestrian master plan.

* Situate parking to enhance the pedestrian environment and facilitate access between destinations.

* Make places walkable for aging populations in response to new demographics and special needs.

Smart Growth Principle #5 – Foster Distinctive Communities with a Strong Sense of Place

The County should look beyond the basic needs for commercial and housing development. Create communities that are distinctive, unique and have a strong sense of civic pride and cohesiveness. Create defined neighborhoods. We need to encourage construction and preservation of buildings and housing that provide unique contributions to the look and feel of the community while creating distinctive and unique community assets.

5. Foster Distinctive Communities with a Strong Sense of Place

- * Create a state tax credit to encourage adaptive reuse of historic or architecturally significant buildings.
- * Plant trees throughout communities, and preserve existing trees during new construction.
- * Create active and secure open spaces.
- * Create opportunities for community interaction.

- * Enact clear design guidelines so that streets, buildings, and public spaces work together to create a sense of place.
- * Preserve scenic vistas through the appropriate location of telecommunication towers, and improved control of billboards.
- * Create community greens in site plans.
- * Define communities and neighborhoods with visual cues.
- * Highlight cultural assets through public art and event nights.

Smart Growth Principle #6 – Preserve Open Space, Farmland, Scenic Views, and Critical Environmental Areas

The County should promote infrastructure to be added in a coordinated manner and locate new development in the most cost-efficient places – where there are existing roads, sewers, water lines, and other utilities. This, in turn, leads to less growth pressure (and greater preservation) of the more rural areas of the County.

6. Preserve Open Space, Farmland, Scenic Views, and Environmental Areas

- * Use land management techniques and acquisition to protect drinking water sources.
- * Create a network of trails and greenways.
- * Design and implement an information-gathering and education program.
- * Provide mechanisms for preserving working lands.
- * Link land conservation with other smart growth principles.
- * Adopt a green infrastructure plan.
- * Employ regional development strategies that better protect and preserve open space in edge areas.
- * Invest in the rural economy to preserve working lands.

- * Design and implement zoning tools that preserve open space.
- * Partner with nongovernmental organizations to acquire and protect land.
- * Use an array of financing techniques to preserve open space.
- * Establish priority-setting criteria for open space acquisition.
- * Support tree preservation through public-private partnerships.
- * Use TDR's, PDR's and other market mechanisms to conserve private lands.
- * Expand use of innovative financing tools to facilitate open space acquisition and preservation.

Smart Growth Principle #7 – Strengthen and Direct Development Towards Existing Communities

Growth should be directed towards communities already served by infrastructure and resources. Barriers to development in existing areas include: zoning, government policies and regulations, costs of renovation and code compliance, and taxpayer subsidies offered by localities to develop fringe and greenfield areas. Sometimes, developers see fringe and greenfield areas as easier because there are typically fewer restrictions and there is less public objection. They can often be inadvertently pushed that way by public policy.

7. Strengthen and Direct Development Towards Existing Communities

- * Adopt a “fix-it-first” policy that sets priorities for upgrading existing facilities.
- * Create economic incentives for businesses and home owners to locate in areas with existing infrastructure.
- * Facilitate programs to encourage home renovation and rehabilitation in existing neighborhoods.

* Locate civic buildings in existing communities rather than in greenfields.

* Conduct an “infill checkup” to evaluate and prioritize infill and brownfield sites for redevelopment.

* Encourage infill by adopting innovative stormwater regulations and practices.

Smart Growth Principle #8 – Provide a Variety of Transportation Choices

Various modes of transportation including pedestrian, bike, and auto should be balanced to offer choice to the public. Parking requirements for infill development in village cores can be reduced, or if other parking is already available, consider shared parking.

In village cores, a network of smaller streets can help to diffuse traffic rather than concentrate it. The street network should be walkable and bikeable to desired destinations. Village streets should be scaled to a neighborhood level through smaller widths, connectivity to adjacent uses, slower speeds, and mixed uses with retail.

8. Provide a Variety of Transportation Choices

* Address parking needs and opportunities.

* Support and provide incentives for multimodal transportation systems that include supportive land use and development.

* Create comprehensive bicycling programs.

* Create programs and policies that support car sharing.

* Plan and permit road networks of neighborhood scaled streets (generally two or four lanes) with high levels of connectivity and short blocks.

Smart Growth Principle #9 – Make Development Decisions Predictable, Fair, and Cost Effective

In order for Smart Growth to be successful, investors, developers, and builders, must be able to make a profit. Government investment in infrastructure can shape the type of development being created. Conventional zoning, which was used to separate uses, has taken communities from being pedestrian-oriented to being car-dependant in order for citizens to conduct day-to-day activities.

Current design, building, and zoning codes can often be deterrents to Smart Growth, or even make it illegal, due to setbacks, parking requirements, height and density restrictions, and other standards. Obtaining variances can be costly and time-consuming. Additional effort and expense caused by regulations and the uncertainty of acceptance often pushes developers and those who finance their projects towards conventional development.

Smart Growth measures, such as alleys to allow for parking in the rear of buildings, sidewalks, bicycle lanes, landscaping, buffers, and parks for open space, can be expensive to implement. They can serve as a deterrent for developers, even though costs can be recouped through density bonuses and having to install less infrastructure. The County should make a concerted effort to support innovative designs, including compact, pedestrian-oriented, and mixed-use developments that promote an ease of connectivity.

9. Make Development Decisions Predictable, Fair, and Cost Effective

* Educate elected leaders and public officials about smart growth.

* Create design guidelines to streamline construction and enhance project

marketability.

- * Make zoning codes and other land development regulations simple to use and easy to read.

- * Display zoning regulations and design goals in pictorial fashion to better illustrate development goals.

- * Encourage demand for smart growth through consumer incentives.

- * Create a planning strategy to provide for development in rural markets while maintaining rural character.

- * Implement geographic information system-based planning into the development process.

Smart Growth Principle #10 – Encourage Community and Stakeholder Collaboration in Development Decisions

The County should identify and address barriers to full public participation in the development process. Meeting notices should be widely circulated in all public places including the Library, announcements at community forums, websites, radio, and public access channels. Localities should be careful to not overlook key stakeholder groups such as developers, contractors, realtors, bankers, and investors. The County can also go directly to civic, charitable, and religious groups to seek public input and comments.

Another effective tool to gain a greater level of public input would be to create hand-drawn sketches or computer simulations of proposed developments and/or streetscapes. Using this method at public meetings would help to demonstrate what Smart Growth principles would look like if applied in the community. Residents could look at alternative scenarios and even vote on various designs and visions for their community.

10. Encourage Community and Stakeholder Collaboration in Development Decisions

- * Illustrate complex concepts with photographs and imagery.

- * Use unconventional methods and forums to educate all stakeholders about the development and decision-making processes.

- * Conduct community visioning exercises to determine how and where the neighborhood will grow.

- * Bring developers and the development community into the visioning process.

- * Take local government officials and residents to visit communities with Smart Growth Ordinances to see their effect.

- * Use color-coded maps to establish a planning and zoning framework for future planning decisions.

- * Incorporate public opinion and interests often and routinely into the planning process.

- * Seek technical assistance to develop a public participation process.