

Chapter 1

THE FRAMEWORK FOR PLANNING

As Tappahannock grows and changes over the next twenty years, this Comprehensive Plan will serve as a guide for making public and private decisions regarding the Town's growth and development. The Plan is a culmination of a cooperative effort, pulling together the knowledge and skills of diverse citizens and staff.

This Plan presents a future vision of Tappahannock into the year 2027 along with recommendations for bringing that vision to fruition. The ideas of the Plan are a distillation of the community's many desires, tempered by what seems feasible and reasonable. This Plan is not intended to be a static document. It should be reviewed and updated periodically to reflect new development trends, shifts in the economy, or changes in the community's goals and objectives.

Tappahannock is a special place with a unique character, culture and history that distinguishes this community from hundreds of towns throughout the country. This Comprehensive Plan particularly addresses the preservation and enhancement of these special qualities and that distinctive personality felt by the citizens who live and work here. This sense of uniqueness and pride of place are the guiding forces and strongest motivation for those who have contributed to the realization of this document.

DEFINITIONS AND PURPOSE

The Comprehensive Plan is an official public document adopted by the Town Planning Commission and the Town Council. The Plan is a general, long-range, policy and implementation guide for decisions concerning the overall growth and development of the Town.

The Plan is comprehensive because the elements cover the entire range of development issues which can be influenced significantly by the Town Council and other governing authorities and agencies. The Plan is general because the recommendations are broad, rather than narrowly defining decisions for land use at specific sites. The Plan is long-range because consideration is given to the problems and opportunities which may arise over the next twenty years. The Plan is dynamic because there can be amendments to adapt to new situations and meet new challenges.

Although adopted as an official public document, the Comprehensive Plan is not a development ordinance. This plan serves as a catalyst and guide to the establishment of, or revisions to, other ordinances or planning tools. These include the zoning and subdivision ordinances, and the

capital budget. The Land Use Plan Map, included in this plan, serves to illustrate the mix and location of land uses where the Plan's policies and recommendations will be applied. This mapped information is general in nature and not appropriate for determining the suitability of specific sites for any specific use.

LEGAL BASIS FOR COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING

The preparation of a comprehensive plan is the legal responsibility of the Town Planning Commission under Virginia Planning Enabling Legislation, Section 15.2-2223 of the Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended. The also Plan also serves to satisfy the requirements of Title 9, Section 10-20-171 of the Virginia Administrative Code for Chesapeake Bay Preservation Area Designation and Management Regulations, which establishes standards for local Comprehensive Plan Elements designed to implement Chesapeake Bay Water Quality Improvement objectives. Any ordinance pertaining to the use of land or the growth and development of the County should conform to the goals, objectives, and policies as they are presented in this Plan. Any ordinance pertaining to the use of land or the growth and development of the Town should conform to the goals, objectives, and policies as they are presented in this Plan.

PAST COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING EFFORTS

The most recent Town of Tappahannock Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 1998. In 2001 an addendum was added to conform with the requirements of the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act.

An earlier Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 1991. A subsequent planning effort was undertaken by the Town with the assistance of the Urban and Regional Planning Department of the Virginia Commonwealth University in 1989. This Plan is intended to build on those past efforts by updating pertinent data and background information and to expand on and focus the implementation of the Plan. The intended result is implementation strategies that will be acted upon within established time frames. Planning and zoning is administered by the Town Manager and plan implementation is primarily the responsibility of the Town Manager's office.

COMPONENTS OF A GROWTH MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

This Comprehensive Plan provides the basic framework and direction for all components of what may be considered the Town's overall Comprehensive Planning Program. It is not a stand-alone document but is supported and, in turn, supports related Planning Program documents such as the ones listed below.

- Zoning Ordinance
- Subdivision Ordinance
- Capital Improvements Budget
- Comprehensive Water Quality Management Plan for the Middle Peninsula: An

Information Search and Review, MPPDC, January 1989

- Soil Survey, MPPDC, June 1998
- Middle Peninsula Planning District Commission Regional Alternative Transportation Study, June 2004

These documents and others, when used concurrently, are the basis for directing and managing growth in Tappahannock.

PROCESS FOR PLAN DEVELOPMENT AND ADOPTION

The revision of the 1998 Comprehensive Plan and 2001 Addendum began in 2005 with the hiring of the Middle Peninsula Planning District Commission. Preparation of this Comprehensive Plan began in late 1997 with the hiring of the planning consulting firm of Redman/Johnston Associates, Ltd.

This plan update is based on review of development trends in the Town which have prompted modest changes to the 1998 Comprehensive Plan. The assistance provided by the Middle Peninsula Planning District Commission has permitted improvements to maps included in this plan which identify various environmental resources and the proposed pattern of future land used in the Town.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES SETTING

The Tappahannock Comprehensive Plan is intended to capture a broad community vision of a future Tappahannock. Written statements that describe future expectations are necessary to describe that vision. These statements are intended to be easily understood and generally accepted among the residents and business interests in the Town.

Goals and objectives are found in this chapter and in the subsequent chapters for each functional area of the Plan, e.g., land use, transportation, community facilities, etc. The goals and objectives formulated by the Town have been incorporated as a basis for the goals and objectives statements in this Plan. Some goals and objectives developed in the 1998 Comprehensive Plan process were retained. Others were carried-over from the 1991 Comprehensive Plan and the Virginia Commonwealth University plan.

Goals are long-range, generalized statements that represent the ultimate desires of the Town. The situations and conditions called for in the goals would normally be achieved only through a sustained series of actions over a considerable period of time. The goal statements in this Plan are sufficiently broad to remain valid as people's values change over time. As these values change, the interpretation of the goals will change also. When this happens, the goals will remain in effect, but new objectives may be developed.

Objectives comprise a proposed series of broad policies that are more immediate and specific in nature than are the goals. Objectives are intended to be intermediate steps that are taken toward achieving the goals. For each goal, several objectives have been developed. The following are

the general development goals of the Town.

- Goal:** *The fine assets of the Town, its people, and their life styles, its diversified business and industrial community and its small town historical charm and high quality of living should be preserved and improved.*
- Goal:** *All future development in the Town should be carefully guided in order to achieve and maintain the highest quality living environment possible.*
- Goal:** *All future development in the Town should be located and designed in such a way that it compliments existing development and provides maximum choice for residents and businesses.*
- Goal:** *The Town should strive for public participation in the planning and decision making process to ensure that the wishes of the community are translated into appropriate courses of action.*

ORGANIZATION OF THE PLAN

The Comprehensive Plan is organized into eleven chapters. These chapters deal with all aspects of land use in the Town. Following this introductory chapter, Chapter 2 highlights past trends and future projections of population and housing. Chapters 3 through 10 are the Plan Elements. Each of these chapters includes a discussion of background and analysis, identification of issues, a statement of goals and objectives, and a summary of implementation recommendations pertaining to each of the functional areas of the plan. Chapter 3 presents the central theme of the report, the Land Use Plan, which designates how, when, and where growth should occur. The other sections include discussions of Economic Development, Transportation, Community Facilities and Services, Housing, Parks and Recreation, Natural Resources Protection, and Downtown Revitalization and Urban Design. The final chapter of the Plan sets forth implementation techniques including details concerning necessary actions and responsibilities for implementing the goals and objectives of the Plan.

