

**AUGUSTA COUNTY  
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE  
2014/2015**



**Adopted  
August 26, 2015**

# *Augusta County, Virginia*

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The Transportation Chapter was updated by the Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission, with  
assistance from the Virginia Department of Transportation and County Staff

# Augusta County Comprehensive Plan Update 2014/2015

August 26, 2015

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## **AUGUSTA COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2014/2015 UPDATE**

### ***I. Introduction***

Augusta County's Comprehensive Plan has a 20 year planning horizon and was first adopted in April of 2007 replacing the 1994 Comprehensive Plan. The county undertook another significant planning effort with the completion of the Fishersville Small Area Plan which was adopted in January of 2009. The Small Area Plan also included the addition of three new land use designations and changes to the countywide Future Land Use Map. An amendment to the Planning Policy Area/Future Land Use maps November 22, 2011 facilitated the expansion of the Greenville sewer system to the village to address potential health risks in the village.

The Comprehensive Plan is not a law or ordinance. It is a guide for land use decision making. It establishes the long term goals which the county seeks to achieve, and it establishes the policy guidelines for when, where, and how to provide public facilities, change zoning designations, and otherwise facilitate, coordinate, and regulate development. Some of the Plan's policies are implemented upon adoption of the Plan. Other policies are not implemented directly by the Plan, but rather will be implemented through future changes to the county's development regulations after adoption of the Plan. It should also be noted that there is no definition section found in the Plan. Instead, terms are used in this Plan as they are defined by County Code. Where a term is not defined by the County Code, a definition is provided in the Plan at the point where the term is introduced.

Included in the Plan is an implementation strategy, which outlines the tasks that need to be completed in order to implement the policy recommendations and the parties responsible. Finally, this Plan includes a capital improvements plan to provide baseline estimates of the cost of implementing the Plan.

State Code provision §15.2-2230 requires the Comprehensive Plan to be reviewed by the Planning Commission at least once every five years and they are to determine whether or not it is advisable to amend the plan. In late 2012, the Planning Commission began the process of reviewing of the Comprehensive Plan. This planning process was a review and not a rewriting of the existing Comprehensive Plan. Over the course of nearly two years, planning staff and the Planning Commission have engaged various county Boards, Commissions, and staff in the review of the Comprehensive Plan seeking input on the need for revisions from those with specific areas of expertise. The result has been modifications to the Goals, Objectives, and Policies section of the plan, changes to the Planning Policy Area and Future Land Use maps, and new transportation and housing chapters reflecting the need for additional information required by the State Code.

As a package, the 2014/2015 Update was the subject of Planning Commission/Board of Supervisors worksessions and a joint public hearing on July 22, 2015. The update was adopted by the Board of Supervisors on August 26, 2015. This update, along with the Comprehensive Plan 2007-2027 is considered to be Augusta County's current Comprehensive Plan.

**A. Demographic Update**

**1. Population Growth**

The population of Augusta County grew significantly over the last 23 years, with the largest increase coming between 1990 and 2000 (See Table 1) when it was over 20%. Growth continued to be strong from 2000 to 2010 with a 12.4% increase. However, the growth appears to be slowing down in the county, based on recent population estimates.

**Table 1  
 Population 1990-2013**

	<b>Augusta County</b>	<b>Staunton</b>	<b>Waynesboro</b>	<b>Region</b>
1990	54,677	24,461	18,549	97,687
2000	65,615	23,853	19,520	108,988
2010	73,750	23,746	21,006	118,502
2012	73,815	24,512	21,378	119,705
2013	74,504	24,577	21,015	120,096

Source: U.S. Census Bureau and Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service

The county's population is expected to continue to grow, but at a somewhat slower pace than in previous decades. As shown in Table 2, the Weldon Cooper Center projects the county population to be grow by more than 17% by the year 2040 when the population is projected to be nearing 95,000.

**Table 2  
 Population Projections 2020-2040**

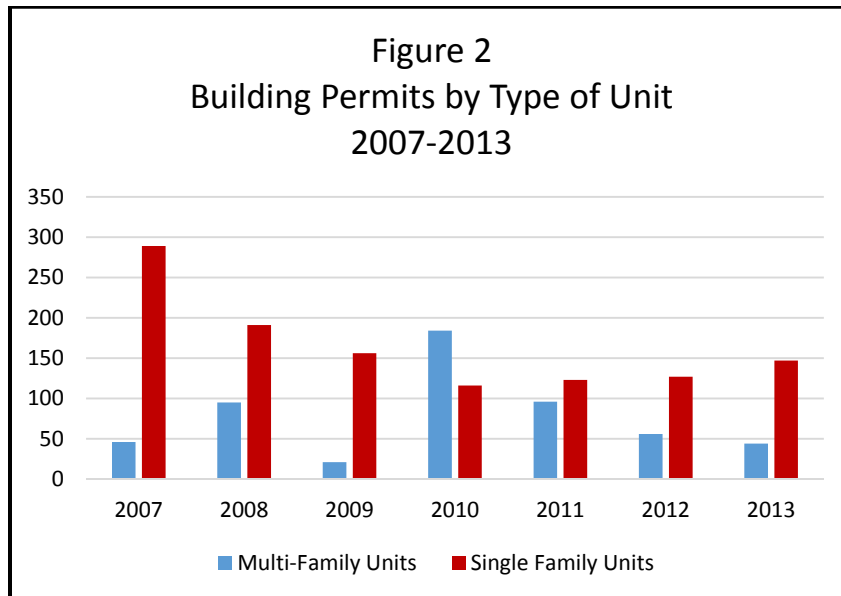
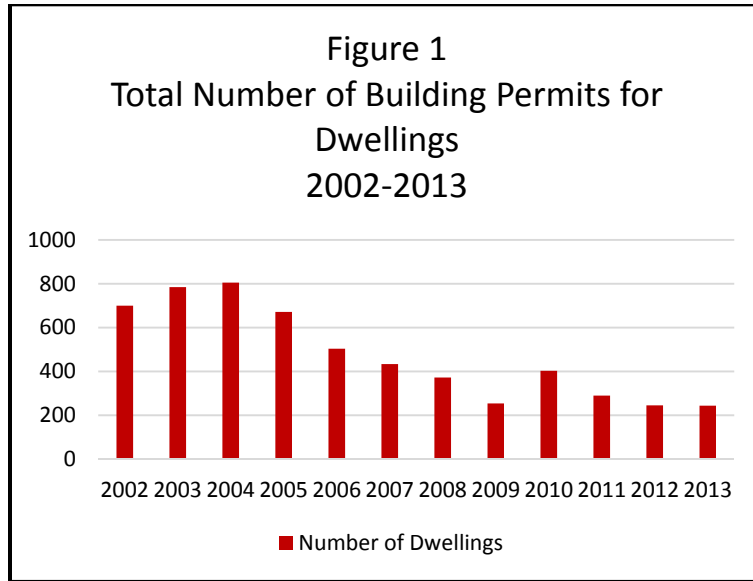
	<b>Augusta County</b>	<b>Staunton</b>	<b>Waynesboro</b>	<b>Region</b>
2020	80,655	24,605	22,375	127,635
2030	87,580	25,574	23,575	136,729
2040	94,713	26,440	24,613	145,766

Source: Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service

**2. Housing Growth**

Housing starts have seen a similar pattern. Figure 1 displays the total number of building permits issued from 2002 through 2013. This data represents permits issued for single family, multi-family, and manufactured homes. From a high of 805 building permits issued for new dwellings in 2004 the number has fallen to just

under 250 in 2013, averaging 287 in the last 5 years. As shown in Figure 2, new multi-family dwellings have accounted for a portion of the volatility in the numbers. Since 2007, the number of building permits for multi-family units has been as low as 21 in 2009 to a high of 184 in 2010. Caution should be used when looking at building permit data, however, because not every dwelling unit for which a building permit is issued is ultimately built and the manufactured home permits includes permits issued to place homes in manufactured home parks which are replacing homes that are already there and not actually a new house being added to the housing inventory in the county.



**3. Current Development**

Residential growth in the county has slowed since the economic downturn, but there are still numerous residential developments, including single family, duplex/townhouse, and multi-family projects, underway or ready to go. Table 3 contains the number of residential dwelling units remaining to be built in approved subdivisions by area.

**Table 3  
 Active Residential Subdivisions by Area**

Location	Zoning	Number of Units Remaining
Fishersville	Single Family	398
	Attached Residential	486
	Rural Residential	32
	Multi-Family	562
Greenville	Single Family	114
	Attached Residential	124
Lyndhurst	Single Family	79
Staunton Area	Single Family	325
	Attached Residential	464
	Multi-Family	613
	Manufactured Home Park	190
Stuarts Draft	Single Family	286
	Multi-Family	316
Waynesboro North	Single Family	228
Weyers Cave	Single Family	75
<b>COUNTYWIDE</b>	Single Family	1505
	Attached Residential	1074
	Rural Residential	32
	Manufactured Home Park	190
	Multi-Family	1491
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4292</b>



In addition to these projects, there are 8 developments with Multi-family Residential zoning that have no active site plan on file (See Table 4). In some cases, there is a development constraint holding these projects back, in others financing is a major hurdle. These properties, if developed at the maximum allowable density of 20 units per acre, could result in an additional 2000 multi-family units. While a maximum density of 20 units per acre is possible for 4 story buildings, the actual developed density is likely to be much lower.

**Table 4  
 Potential Multi-Family Residential Developments by Area**

Location	Zoning	Number of Units Remaining
Fishersville	Multi-Family	1260
Stuarts Draft	Multi-Family	640
Weyers Cave	Multi-Family	100
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>2000</b>

**4. Potential Residential Build-out**

Estimating the growth potential in the county is difficult. With nearly 970 square miles, the number of dwellings that could be built is virtually unlimited. There are currently acres of single family and multi-family residentially zoned property that could result in thousands more dwellings being built in the county. In addition, with over 300,000 acres of General Agriculture zoned property in the county, there are tens of thousands more building lots that could be created through the minor subdivision process. As part of the 2007 Comprehensive Planning process, it was estimated that over 275,000 additional units could be built in the county using the existing zoning regulations, most of which could be in the General Agriculture zoned areas. With the changes that have been made to the county’s zoning regulations that number has certainly changed since 2007, however, the number remains large. The amount of growth that the county can expect is more of a limiting factor than the amount of land available for development. Over the last 10 years, the county has issued an average of 422 building permits for residential units per year. Assuming that number holds true going forward, existing zoning would support more than 650 years of growth.

With all the development potential existing in the county, it is important to remember that the goals of the Comprehensive Plan do not support limiting growth, but rather focus on encouraging growth to occur where the infrastructure exists to support it or where the infrastructure improvements can be made to support growth at the densities envisioned by the plan and where services can be provided most cost effectively in the long-term. The Planning Policy Area Map represents how the county wishes to develop based on the vision for the county that was reaffirmed as part of this Update process. Major changes have been made to the Zoning Ordinance since 2007 to facilitate development to occur in compliance with the

Plan including the creation of additional mixed use districts. However, there is still virtually no limit to the number of parcels that could be created in the agricultural areas. Without further revising the Zoning Ordinance, another way to address this issue is through rezoning. Through the approval of additional residential development in the Urban Service and Community Development Areas, the county can continue to encourage development in patterns that are more consistent with the policies of the Comprehensive Plan. If the county were not to approve any further rezonings, development will likely occur in locations and at densities very different from those envisioned by the Comprehensive Plan.

### ***B. Overall County Vision***

At their July 8, 2014 meeting, the Planning Commission reaffirmed the 2007 vision statement that provides a narrative description of Augusta County 20 or more years in the future and that reflects the essential values of county citizens, as expressed by the county leaders working on their behalf. The vision for Augusta County is:

- **The county's population and employment** will continue to steadily increase, but new growth will be located mainly in the designated Urban Service Areas, thereby preserving the county's agricultural industry and rural character.
- **Urban development** will be encouraged to be compact, pedestrian-oriented, interconnected with a network of streets, sidewalks and trails, and protective of natural resources. New neighborhoods will be places with beauty, identity and charm, which citizens are proud to call home. A blending of uses, housing types, densities and costs will be available to the county's increasingly diverse population.
- **Agriculture** will continue to be the predominant land use in the county and a major part of the economy. The small amount of residential development built within agricultural areas will be incrementally added and very low density, thereby causing minimal disruption to agricultural activities.
- **The county's scenic beauty and natural environment** will be preserved, with farms, forests, mountains, rivers and streams providing the framework and context for development in the urban areas, and continuing to define the landscape in the rural areas.
- **The compact, interconnected pattern of new development** will allow the county to continue to provide high quality, efficient and cost-effective public services and facilities. These may include transportation improvements that maintain and improve safety, capacity and overall mobility for pedestrians and bicyclists as well as motor vehicles, while improving the overall quality of life in neighborhoods.

## ***II. Strategies for Growth***

The 2007 Plan also contained an overall strategy for growth. This strategy begins the task of implementing the Plan's vision for the county. It was also affirmed by the

Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors and is included unchanged in this Plan. The strategy is broken down into three primary concepts:

- Promote a compact, coordinated, orderly, and balanced pattern of development in order to preserve farming and the rural character of the county and make more efficient use of existing and planned public facilities and services.
- Establish distinct areas for urban and rural development as well as areas for a full range of agricultural and forestal uses.
- Implement planning policies and regulations using a reasonable combination of voluntary and mandatory measures.

Following these strategy concepts are the goals, objectives, and policies, which are designed to more specifically delineate the strategy for growth. The goals are divided into 14 sections including agriculture, economy, education, general government, historic resources, housing, human services, land use and development, library, natural resources, parks and recreation, public safety, transportation, and utilities. Within these 46 goals are numerous objectives and policies. The objectives are specific subsections of the goals, while the policies are recommended actions that the county should take toward the realization of the goals. Most goals include one or more objective. Most objectives include one or more policy.

### ***A. Planning Policy Areas***

The Planning Policy Areas and the Future Land Use Categories also work to implement the county's vision. The Plan contains four Planning Policy Areas and twelve Future Land Use categories. The boundaries of the Planning Policy Areas can be found on the attached Planning Policy Area/Future Land Use Map.

The four Policy Areas identified on the Planning Policy Area/Future Land Use Map include:

- Urban Service Areas (80% of future residential growth)
- Community Development Areas (10% of future residential growth)
- Rural Conservation Areas (5% of future residential growth)
- Agricultural Conservation Areas (5% of future residential growth)

While it is anticipated that each of these Policy Areas will absorb their share of residential growth, at approximately the rates outlined above, it is the intention of this Plan to encourage as much development as possible to take place in the Urban Service and Community Development Areas. Because of this, a target of 90% of future residential development locating in these areas has been established. While this is an ambitious target, input at the public meetings on the Plan in 2006 and 2007 supported the desire to maintain the rural character of the county and a belief that too much growth had been occurring in the rural areas. Since the Plan was adopted in 2007 and modified in 2009, the rate of development has slowed

considerably. The rate of residential development in the Urban Service and Community Development Areas slowed dramatically and proportionally slowed more than the development occurring in the rural areas. The goal of limiting residential growth occurring in the Urban Service and Community Development Areas to 90% is an aggressive goal, but should be attainable if the recommendations of the Plan are implemented.

**Table 5** provides a statistical breakdown of the county by Planning Policy Area.

**Table 5.**  
**Acreeage by Planning Policy Area**

<b>Policy Area</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Urban Service Area	39,391	6.4%
Community Development Area	34,369	5.5
Rural Conservation Area	83,087	13.4%
Agricultural Conservation Area	248,432	40.1%
Public Land	214,410	34.6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>619,689</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Source: Augusta County GIS, June 2015

The Policy Areas have been modified as part of the Comprehensive Plan Update process. Changes to the Urban Service and Community Development Areas have been made in areas west of Staunton and in the Harriston/Vesper View areas reflecting the limited amount of water and sewer service available in these areas. Changes were also made in some Urban Service Areas due to the impact of by-right development that has occurred, especially along the Route 608 corridor between Fishersville and Stuarts Draft. Changes to the Rural Conservation and Agriculture Conservation Areas have been made due to the conservation easements which have been placed on properties.

The descriptions of the Policy Areas remains largely unchanged since the adoption of the Plan in 2007, but are repeated here for clarity.

### **Urban Service Areas**

Urban Service Areas are defined as areas which are appropriate locations for development of a full range of public and private land uses of an urban character on public water and sewer, in either the immediate or long term future.

Urban Service Areas are characterized by relatively substantial amounts of existing development and public utilities and facilities, substantial amounts of available developable land, and good transportation access. Those areas designated as Urban Service Areas are those which are appropriate for urban development on public water and sewer within the 20 year timeframe of this Plan. The infrastructure is not in place at this time to provide service to every parcel identified as being in the Urban Service Area. However, as development occurs the expectation is that it will be on public water and sewer service. It is also recognized that not every parcel of

land in the Urban Service Area will be sold for development within the next 20 years and not every parcel, due to site specific considerations, is appropriate for development at the densities proposed.

The development that is expected to take place in the Urban Service Areas is expected to be compact, interconnected, and pedestrian oriented while remaining sensitive to the context of the surrounding development as well as the surrounding natural features. Due to the urban nature of the development planned for these areas, intensive agricultural operations would not be encouraged to locate or expand in these areas.

Urban Service Areas are priority locations for:

- Significant amounts of urban residential and employment growth
- Expansions of public water and sewer service
- Local and regional public facilities
- Most “one-of-a-kind” public facilities such as hospitals
- Most industrial development – light, medium, and heavy, with adequate facilities and buffers
- Larger scale urban residential and business developments
- Larger scale mixed use developments, where different combinations of residential, business, and industrial uses will be found within a development

### **Community Development Areas**

Community Development Areas are local community settlements which have existing public water or public sewer systems in place or which have relatively good potential for extensions of either of those utilities. These areas are appropriate locations for future low density, rural land uses based upon road access, the existing land use pattern, and proximity to existing public facilities and services, although they are planned to remain predominantly residential in character.

Most of the Community Development Areas have only public water service. The New Hope area has only public sewer service. Community Development Areas do not have both public water and sewer service; therefore they are only suitable for lower density, primarily residential uses. As development occurs over the very long term and public water and sewer service is extended, some Community Development Areas may evolve to the point that they are designated Urban Service Areas. The infrastructure is not in place at this time to provide service to every parcel identified as being in the Community Development Area. However, as development occurs the expectation is that it will be on public water or sewer service. It is also recognized that not every parcel of land in the Community Development Area will be sold for development within the next 20 years and not every parcel, due to site specific considerations, is appropriate for development at the densities proposed.

The development that is expected to take place in the Community Development Areas is expected to be compact, interconnected, and pedestrian oriented while remaining sensitive to the context of the surrounding development as well as the surrounding natural features. Clustered developments would be encouraged in these areas.

As they are existing local community settlements and areas where the county wishes to continue to promote residential development, intensive agricultural operations would not be encouraged to locate or expand in the Community Development Areas.

Community Development Areas are priority locations for:

- Moderate amounts of small scale residential and employment growth at marginally higher densities than in the Rural Conservation Areas
- Limited expansions of public water or sewer service
- Local public facilities
- Small scale, low-intensity commercial and/or light industrial developments

#### **Rural Conservation Areas**

Rural Conservation Areas are areas which are substantially subdivided and/or developed with residential uses, which have no public water or sewer service and which have few existing intensive agricultural operations. They are therefore priority locations for moderate amounts of future rural residential development. Ideally, any development would be in the form of incremental additions to existing settlements.

Any development taking place in the Rural Conservation Areas would be expected to be sensitive to the context of the surrounding agricultural areas as well as the surrounding natural features. Such development would primarily be in the form of Rural Residential subdivisions as well as business uses related to agriculture.

Recognizing the potential conflicts between residential and agricultural operations, new intensive farming operations would not be encouraged to locate in these areas. However, existing operations are recognized to have priority for expanding their operations.

Rural Conservation Areas are priority locations for:

- Moderate amounts of low density rural residential development on individual wells and septic fields, including clustered development (although there are concerns about groundwater protection)
- Non-intensive agricultural and forestry activities

### **Agricultural Conservation Areas**

Agricultural Conservation Areas are areas which have mainly farm or forest uses and have generally the lowest overall density of residential uses, have no public water or sewer service, and have most of the county's intensive agricultural operations. These areas are planned to remain in predominantly agricultural and forestal uses with very little additional residential development.

Any development taking place in the Agricultural Conservation Areas would be expected to be sensitive to the context of the surrounding agricultural areas as well as the surrounding natural features. Such development would primarily be in the form of new dwellings on minor subdivision lots as well as business uses related to agriculture. Clustered developments would not be encouraged in these areas.

Agricultural Conservation Areas are priority locations for:

- Minimal, incremental amounts of very low density rural residential development on individual wells and septic fields
- A full range of long term agricultural, forestry and natural resource industry activities, including intensive agricultural operations.

### **Rural Communities (Overlay)**

The designated Rural Communities include many of those existing local community settlements which function as cultural, historic, social or economic focal points for surrounding rural areas. While most do not have public water or sewer service, and are therefore located in the Rural Conservation or Agricultural Conservation Areas, a few do have public services and are located in a Community Development Area.

The Rural Communities are generally appropriate locations for some amount of future rural development in accord with the generally limited road access, facilities and services. Any future development in these areas should conform to the established development pattern in the community. These areas are seen as potential locations for future small scale, business activity serving local needs. These areas are designated with a Rural Community Overlay on the Planning Policy Area/Future Land Use Map.

## ***B. Future Land Use Categories***

The future land use categories function within the geographic areas defined by the Urban Service and Community Development Areas. They serve to identify the specific use and density that is proposed for a parcel. There are twelve future land use categories identified by the Planning Policy Area/Future Land Use Map. Those areas include:

- **Industrial**, where industrial uses of varying scale and scope would be appropriate

- **Business**, where business uses of varying scale and scope would be appropriate
- **Public Use**, which identifies land owned by, or utilized by, a federal, state or local government agency
- **Community Mixed Use**, which may include a variety of residential uses at a density of six to twelve dwelling units per acre and, on up to 40% of the total land area, retail and office uses and in some, but not all cases, industrial uses
- **Neighborhood Mixed Use**, which may include a variety of residential uses at a density of four to eight dwelling units per acre and convenience retail and office uses on up to 20% of the total land area
- **Village Mixed Use**, which encourages the adaptive reuse of existing structures, as well as infill development conforming to the existing or historic development pattern in the community; will be found only in the Community Development and Urban Service Areas
- **Planned Residential**, which may include a variety of residential uses at a density of four to eight dwelling units per acre
- **Multifamily Residential**, which may include residential buildings housing between nine and sixteen dwelling units per acre, as well as manufactured home developments
- **Single-Family Attached Residential**, which may include attached residential units like townhouses and duplexes at a density of between four and eight dwelling units per acre; will be found only in the Urban Service Area
- **Medium Density Residential**, which may include detached residential units at a density of between three and four dwelling units per acre
- **Low Density Residential**, which may include detached residential units at a density of between one-half and one dwelling unit per acre; will be found only in the Community Development Area
- **Urban Open Space**, which identifies land permanently set aside for open space uses such as conservation easements and county recreation areas

Like the Planning Policy Areas, the future land use categories are not zoning classifications. Instead they act to inform the decision making process on rezoning and development applications. Since the land located in the Rural and Agricultural Conservation Areas is expected to remain rural in character, those Policy Areas do not have designated future land uses. **Table 6** provides a statistical breakdown of the future land use categories.



**Table 6.**  
**Acreage by Future Land Use Category**

<b>Future Land Use</b>	<b>Existing Acres</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Proposed Acres</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Business	5238	6.9%	5118	6.7%
Community Mixed Use	3564	4.7%	3717	4.8%
Industrial	6720	8.8%	6717	8.8%
Low Density Residential	32,093	42.1%	33,327	43.4%
Medium Density Residential	15,619	20.5%	14,611	19.0%
Multifamily Residential	838	1.1%	842	1.1%
Neighborhood Mixed Use	3401	4.4%	3401	4.4%
Planned Residential	3011	3.9%	2740	3.6%
Public Use	2965	3.9%	4167	5.4%
	1268	1.7%	0	-
Single-Family Attached Residential	901	1.2%	815	1.1%
Urban Open Space	646	0.8%	1136	1.5%
Village Mixed Use	13	-	155	0.2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>76,277</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>76,746</b>	

Source: Augusta County GIS

Note: The differences in the total acreage designated with a Future Land Use category represents land that was removed from Urban Service and Community Development Areas and additional land that was designated Public Use in the Rural Conservation and Agriculture Conservation Areas.

### ***III. Goals, Objectives, and Policies***

As part of the Comprehensive Plan review, the Goals, Objectives, and Policies in each of the content areas was considered based on changes that have occurred, or are occurring, and the progress made in each area. Goals, objectives, and policies have been added, deleted, and modified accordingly. An update for twelve of the fourteen areas precedes the revised Goals, Objectives, and Policies. Transportation and Housing are not included in this section since they have been substantially rewritten to meet Code of Virginia requirements. They follow this section as standalone chapters of the update.

#### **A. Updates**

##### **Agriculture**

Agriculture has historically been, and continues to be, a major component of the county's economy and culture. Since 2007, the county has established an Agricultural Industry Board whose mission it is to identify major challenges facing agriculture in Augusta County and to support the development of programs aimed at strengthening the agricultural economy and preserving agriculture in Augusta County. The Agriculture Industry Board is responsible for identifying challenges

to the agricultural economy of Augusta County and working with the Extension Service to initiate programs designed to improve the sustainability of agriculture in the county. In addition, the Agriculture Industry Board is responsible for recommending short term and long range courses of action to the Board of Supervisors.

In 2010, the county made changes to the Zoning Ordinance to encourage agri-tourism and rural businesses, as well as eliminate increased setbacks for intensive agricultural operations. These changes were made to help farmers diversify their operations and supplement their farm income. Changes to the Goals, Objectives, and Policies in this section reflect the progress the county has made in this area since 2007, as well as input from the Agricultural Industry Board.

### **Economy**

Economic development has become a more focused effort of the county since 2007. The county completed the Economic Development Strategy called for in the Comprehensive Plan and has begun implementing many of the Strategy's recommendations. The county hired its first full-time Economic Development Director in September of 2009 and a Marketing Assistant in February of 2013. Changes have been made to this section based on the progress the county has made in implementing the Economic Development Strategy and the identification of the next steps that need to be taken based on input from the Economic Development Authority and Economic Development staff.

### **Education**

The education component of the Comprehensive Plan contains goals, objectives, and policies related to public and private education for citizens of all ages. From a public education standpoint, the county has closed Ladd Elementary, substantially renovated and expanded Wilson Elementary School, and relocated much of their administrative operations to Verona since the last Comprehensive Plan was adopted. The public school system has its own governing body and staff that do their planning and decision making, so the goals, objectives, and policies in this section are more general in nature and many of the recommended changes are coming at the School Board Staff's suggestion. While not playing a direct role in private schools or home schooling, the county does recognize the important role of the Augusta County library in supporting these educational efforts.

### **General Government**

Efficiency in government operations continues to be a major theme in this section. Changes to the goals, objectives, and policies reflect the desire to continue to find ways to maintain the lowest possible property tax burden necessary to provide the level of public facilities and services desired by county residents and required in order to protect public health and safety. A goal to promote environmental sustainability and stewardship was added to the Plan to reflect on-going county initiatives.

### **Historic Resources**

Augusta County is rich in historic resources and due in large part to the dedication of private property owners, efforts to protect those resources have continued since the last plan was adopted. Changes to this section reflect the need to balance all the demands placed on limited county resources and the recognition that, at this time, the county's role in preservation of historic resources will be supportive, rather than direct service delivery.

### **Human Services**

This section includes services that are provided by agencies that have local, state, and federal funding sources and mandates. Changes to this section reflect changes in terminology and an increased focus on services provided to youth and regional efforts to maximize service delivery efficiency as suggested by service providers.

### **Land Use and Development**

As part of the implementation strategy of the 2007 Comprehensive Plan, the county has made numerous changes to the Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances, as well as the Erosion and Sediment Control and Stormwater Ordinances. The county has deleted the Exclusive Agriculture and Limited Business districts and created Rural Conservation, Recreational Vehicle Park, Planned Commerce, and Village Mixed Use districts. Recognizing the slower growth rate of the county, changes to this section reflect the desire to encourage development to occur in the designated Urban Service Areas and provide for the services needed to support that growth rather than expecting new growth to bear all the costs associated with development in the development areas.

### **Library**

The Augusta County Library facilities have grown considerably since the completion of the last Comprehensive Plan. The main library in Fishersville has undergone several renovation efforts resulting in a new children's wing and a remodeled entrance area and infrastructure upgrade. A library station was opened in Middlebrook in late 2008 and the branch library in Craigsville was moved to the new town hall in early 2009. Library services are also changing reflecting the importance of technology in today's world. Changes to this section represent input from library staff, the Library Board, appointed by the Board of Supervisors, and the Friends of the Library, an independent organization devoted to assisting the library achieve its goals.

### **Natural Resources**

The Natural Resources section of the plan has been updated to reflect significant changes in both federal and state law and regulations since the development of the 2007 Comprehensive Plan. Most significantly, the state has absorbed the Tributary Strategies into the Chesapeake Bay TMDL and developed Phase I and Phase II Watershed Implementation Plans for that TMDL. This action has prompted the creation of new programs and required changes to existing programs. Specifically, the state has passed legislation and implemented Urban Nutrient Management

regulations, amended the Virginia Erosion and Sediment Control Program, completely revamped the Virginia Stormwater Management Program, and passed legislation and implemented Resource Management Plan regulations in an attempt to provide some level of predictability for nutrient reduction for the agricultural community. In addition to those changes which were largely prompted by the need to reduce nutrient loading in the Chesapeake Bay, the state has provided multiple updates to the 303-D “Impaired Waters” list to EPA and has passed legislation and implemented Non-Conventional Sewage Disposal regulations. Each of these changes required the county to evaluate our existing plans and revise accordingly.

In addition to actions prompted by federal and state requirements, the county has added cluster provisions to the General Agriculture District and created a new district, Rural Conservation, to encourage clustered residential developments in rural areas where there are pressures to develop residentially. The county has also adopted a Source Water Protection Ordinance, made revisions to the county’s stormwater and floodplain ordinances, and is currently in the process of adding the Dam Break Inundation Zones to the tax maps and the Geographic Information System. This section of the plan has been updated to reflect these changes and additions.

### **Parks and Recreation**

County parks and recreation facilities have grown significantly since 2007 offering more passive, as well as active, recreational opportunities for county residents. The county acquired Natural Chimneys from the regional park authority and is now operating the campground and recreational facility as a county facility. The county has continued to make improvements to the facilities in Stuarts Draft, Augusta Springs, Deerfield, and Crimora. On the programming side, the county has increased the use of the schools as community centers for more widespread programming opportunities and increased the amount of programming for seniors. The Parks and Recreation Master Plan was written in 2003. Once updated it will be presented to the Board of Supervisors for inclusion as part of the Comprehensive Plan. Changes to the Goals, Objectives, and Policies in this section reflect the progress the county has made in this area since 2007, as well as input from the Parks and Recreation Commission and staff.

### **Public Safety**

There are currently 17 stations physically located within the county that provide fire and/or rescue services. These are augmented by 12 agencies located outside of the county, including the Staunton and Waynesboro Fire Departments, which assist in providing service in the county through mutual aid agreements.

Fire and rescue services have gone from a predominantly volunteer system in 2007 to a hybrid system of career staff augmenting the volunteers in service delivery. This seems to track a national and statewide trend of declining volunteerism due, in part, to training requirements and the multiple levels of service expected. In 2007, there were 44 career staff providing fire/rescue services in the county

augmenting the volunteers in 8 of the 17 fire/rescue stations. By 2014, the number has grown to 86 career staff augmenting the volunteers in 13 of the 17 stations. At 5 of these stations, career staff are providing the predominant service in either fire, rescue or both areas. In February of 2010, Augusta County began working on a Revenue Recovery Plan and revised it in May of 2011. The implementation of Revenue Recovery has allowed for a partial recovery of costs associated with providing EMS services. However, it does not cover all the costs associated with maintaining the level of service that is expected from county citizens.

Efforts to update the Fire and Rescue Master Plan, prepared in 2010, are on-going and will be followed up with an Implementation Plan designed to reflect the priorities and funding capabilities of the county in this service area. Input from Fire/Rescue, Sheriff's Department, and the Emergency Communications Center staff was utilized in drafting changes to this section.

### **Utilities**

The Service Authority has completed major sewage treatment plant upgrades to the Middle River, Fishersville, and Stuarts Draft sewage treatment plants since 2007 to meet the goals of the Chesapeake Bay Act. In addition, a sewage collection system has been installed in Greenville to connect the village to the treatment plant located at the I-81 Route 11/340 Interchange. Major water system improvements include construction of water tanks in Stuarts Draft and Verona.

The county has adopted Sourcewater Protection Overlay zoning as a means of protecting the public water supply. Changes to this section were made as a result of input from the Augusta County Service Authority and county Environmental Management staff.

## ***B. Agriculture***

**Goal 1:** Enhance the economic strength of the county's agriculture and forestry industry.

Objective A: Maintain an organizational framework to provide leadership and advocacy for the agricultural and forestry industry.

*Policy 1:* Agriculture Industry Board. Continue to support the Agriculture Industry Board. The Agriculture Industry Board should work with the Board of Supervisors to review issues related to the preservation and promotion of agriculture and forestry in Augusta County.

*Policy 2:* Agriculture Vitality. The county should support efforts focused on sustaining agriculture programs and improving the economic viability of agriculture and forestry in Augusta County. The county should work with the Virginia Cooperative Extension Service and landowners who want their

land to remain in agricultural production to ensure that their land remains productive.

*Policy 3: Promotion and Education.* The county and the Agriculture Industry Board should work cooperatively with the Extension Service and other state and federal agencies to provide education for agricultural landowners detailing the importance of keeping their land in agricultural and forestry production. Additionally, a program for educating non-farming residents on the benefits of the agricultural economy should be developed.

Objective B: Provide a range of voluntary options for farmers and farmland owners for keeping their land in farming and open space land uses. Provide sufficient incentives and protections for agricultural land uses so as to reduce the number of new dwellings constructed in the Rural Conservation and Agricultural Conservation Areas over the next 20 years.

*Policy 1: Agricultural and Forestal Districts.* The county should consider adding incentives to encourage the creation and support of additional Agricultural and Forestal Districts in the Rural Conservation and Agricultural Conservation Areas as well as to support the continuation of the existing Districts.

*Policy 2: Conservation Easements.* The county should support the placement of conservation easements on property located in the Rural Conservation and Agricultural Conservation Areas. Proposed easements in Urban Service Areas and Community Development Areas may be supported after review by the Board of Supervisors.

Objective C: Ensure that the agricultural and forestry industry in Augusta County has available to it a wide array of methods for maintaining a viable agricultural economy.

*Policy 1: Agricultural Development and Enhancement.* While continuing to support traditional agricultural operations such as beef, dairy, poultry, sheep, swine, and crops, the county should encourage the further development of the local agricultural industry through multiple approaches, including promoting and marketing the local agricultural industry through such organizations as local farm agencies, educational institutions, and farmers markets. The county should also encourage the continued development of new agricultural crops, products, and processes for use in Augusta County.

*Policy 2: Agricultural Tourism:* The county should market the county's agricultural and natural resources as amenities and destinations. The county

should continue to encourage the development of agri-tourism and small-scale supplemental business activities on existing farms.

*Policy 3: Agricultural opportunities.* Identify opportunities for farms to diversify and grow their businesses. Explore opportunities for the use of locally grown agricultural products by local restaurants, industries, schools, and government institutions.

Objective D: Support programs to help ensure the transition of agricultural land ownership from one generation of farmers to the next. The county should work with state and federal agencies as well as local organizations to develop programs that will assist young farmers in acquiring resources ranging from education and mentorship to investment capital and tax breaks.

Objective E: Support agricultural education programs for persons of all ages.

*Policy 1: Agricultural Education and Youth Programs.* The Board of Supervisors and the School Board should continue to support agriculture education and youth programs such as FFA, 4-H, and Young Farmers and their initiatives which encourage young people to develop entrepreneurial skills, learn from mentors in the agri-business community, and create new and diverse agriculture enterprises.

*Policy 2: Governor's School for Agriculture.* The Board of Supervisors and the School Board should encourage local student participation in the Governor's School for Agriculture.

*Policy 3: Environmental Education.* The county should work cooperatively with local, state, and federal agencies, as well as private organizations, to make available to all county farmers and foresters, information on environmentally sound practices and the federal, state, and local programs that encourage them.

*Policy 4: Demonstration Farms.* The county should support the on-going research and development efforts at demonstration farms such as McCormick Farm in Steeles Tavern and encourage the location of additional demonstration farms in the county, if feasible.

**Goal 2:** Protect existing agricultural and forestry operations in the Rural Conservation and Agricultural Conservation Areas from conflicts with other land uses and from being converted to other land uses.

Objective A: Minimize the number and level of conflicts between agricultural and residential land uses while protecting the established and potential agricultural uses of the property.

*Policy 1: Intensive Agricultural Operations.* The county should protect, and support the expansion of, intensive agricultural operations in the county.

*Policy 2: Forest Management.* The county should encourage the practice of forest management in the Rural Conservation and Agricultural Conservation Areas.

*Policy 3: Permitted Uses in Agricultural Zoning Districts.* The county should conduct a study to determine the effectiveness of the changes made to the General Agriculture District and the elimination of the Exclusive Agriculture District.

Reciprocal setbacks should be implemented for single-family and multi-family housing located in or adjacent to the Rural Conservation or Agricultural Conservation Areas.

**Objective B:** Discourage encroachment of residential land uses into areas that have good prospects for long-term farming or forestry activities.

*Policy 1: Residential Dwellings.* The county should examine the different methods available for restricting the number of new dwellings constructed in the Rural Conservation and Agricultural Conservation Areas and if built, minimizing the impact on existing and potential agricultural operations. Where clustering of dwellings is desired, consideration should be given to the use of the preservation tract so that it doesn't become a nuisance to the residential development, the agricultural neighbors, or the county.

*Policy 2: Lot Creation.* Continue to explore and implement methods for reducing the number of lots created in agriculturally zoned areas through the minor subdivision process. New minimum or maximum lot sizes, limits on the family member exception, and restrictions on boundary line adjustments, as well as other available methods, should be considered. Regulations relating to the configuration of new lots should also be considered.

*Policy 3: Minor Subdivision Activity.* Data on the rate and location of minor subdivisions should be monitored regularly. A report including this data should be provided to the Board of Supervisors at least annually. Significant changes in the rate of subdivision should be reported to the board immediately.

**Goal 3:** Ensure that agricultural and forestry operations use environmentally sound methods.

**Objective A:** Support a variety of programs and strategies for farmers to ensure that their operations are both fiscally and environmentally sound.



*Policy 1: Best Management Practices (BMPs).* Encourage BMPs through cooperation with those federal, state and county agencies, including the Headwaters Soil and Water Conservation District, the Natural Resources Conservation Service, and the Virginia Department of Forestry, that provide technical support to the farming and forestry industries.

*Policy 2: Farm Conservation and Forest Management Plans.* The county should encourage landowners to develop a resource management plan, conservation plan or forest management plan for their farming and forestry operations.

### ***C. Economy***

**Goal 1:** Promote business retention and attraction strategies that are complementary to both new and existing businesses.

Objective A: Retain and expand the business and industrial operations currently located in the county. The primary focus of economic development efforts should be to retain the county's existing employers and facilitate their growth and expansion.

*Policy 1: Maintain the Existing Industry Program.* The county should maintain its outreach efforts to existing businesses and industries in order to identify and anticipate their needs and promote their awareness of current workforce training programs, incentives, and other resources.

*Policy 2: Development Review.* Continue to expedite development review and permitting policies for expansion projects.

*Policy 3: Agricultural opportunities.* Identify opportunities for farmers to diversify and grow their businesses. Explore opportunities for the use of locally grown agricultural products by local restaurants, industries, schools and government institutions.

*Policy 4: Strategic Plan.* Periodically update the strategic plan for economic development of the county. Specific attention should be focused on labor resources and site readiness.

Objective B: Attract industries and businesses which are compatible with and enhance the county's economic climate as well as its environmental, scenic, agricultural, and historic character.

*Policy 1: Balanced Industry Base.* The county should seek to attract businesses and industries that will help to maintain a balanced economy. The county should, in particular, respond to any loss of businesses and

industries by attracting new businesses and industries that will help to regain that balance.

*Policy 2: Complementary Businesses.* The county should seek to attract businesses and industries that support the business activities of existing firms. Suppliers and customers of existing businesses, as well as businesses that could benefit from working synergistically with existing companies should be targeted for attraction.

*Policy 3: Agri-tourism.* Continue to encourage the development of agri-tourism and small-scale supplemental business activities on existing farms.

*Policy 4: Business Assistance.* Work cooperatively with the resources available from the Shenandoah Valley Small Business Development Center and others to stimulate and support small businesses, entrepreneurial activities and start-up businesses.

**Objective C:** Ensure the county's unemployment rate remains low and wages remain competitive.

*Policy 1: Employers Offering Competitive Wages.* The county should work to attract new businesses and industries that pay competitive wages.

**Goal 2:** Build upon the organizational effectiveness and communications functions of the county's economic development efforts.

**Objective A:** Support the Office of Economic Development recognizing the key role it plays in maintaining and enhancing the economic tax base of the county for current and future generations.

*Policy 1: Team Effort.* County departments and county-supported agencies should continue to work together and be provided the tools to make the economic development process as smooth and efficient as possible.

*Policy 2: Public-private Partnerships.* Promote public-private partnerships between the county government and the business community to assist in economic growth.

*Policy 3: Communication.* Communicate with the community at large on economic development related issues.

*Policy 4: Educational Alliances.* Explore opportunities for research and technical support alliances linking Blue Ridge Community College, Mary Baldwin College's Murphy Deming College of Health Sciences, James Madison University, and/or other universities with local business and industry.

*Policy 5: Financing.* Continue and expand the utilization of creative financing tools to fund economic development efforts including incentives for recruiting, training, investing, and other activities for new and existing businesses.

**Objective B:** Expand the tax base by promoting the county as a premier business location.

*Policy 1: Marketing Strategies.* Consistently improve the county's website as it relates to economic development, as well as any other strategies for marketing and promoting the county to its target businesses and industries.

*Policy 2: Market Assets.* Continue to market the county's key economic assets including the transportation and utility infrastructure, as well as the specific operating advantages of the county's location in the region.

*Policy 3: Targeted Businesses.* Recruit new targeted businesses to the area through expanded marketing activities including familiarization trips for site selectors, trade shows for targeted industries, and articles in industry journals.

**Objective C:** Continue to coordinate economic development efforts with the state as well as with neighboring jurisdictions.

*Policy 1: Neighboring Localities.* Continue to work with the cities of Staunton and Waynesboro, as well as adjacent counties, to support business start-ups and expansions and attract additional businesses.

*Policy 2: Shenandoah Valley Partnership.* Continue to participate in and support the economic development efforts of the Shenandoah Valley Partnership.

*Policy 3: Virginia Economic Development Partnership.* Continue to participate in and support the economic development efforts of the Virginia Economic Development Partnership. Encourage available business and industrial sites to be listed on the VirginiaScan database.

**Goal 3:** Enhance the labor resources available to businesses and industries in the county.

**Objective A:** Encourage training and educational programs at the county's educational institutions to provide for continued technical and enrichment opportunities for county residents.

*Policy 1: Awareness.* Working with the Shenandoah Valley Workforce Investment Board, the Shenandoah Valley Partnership, other regional

entities, and neighboring jurisdictions, establish an awareness campaign for students, parents, and career advisors on local job and entrepreneurship opportunities.

*Policy 2:* Center for Manufacturing Engineering Technology. Explore the opportunities for expansion of the Center for Manufacturing Engineering Technology at Stuarts Draft High School.

**Objective B:** Increase the workforce available to employers in the county.

*Policy 1:* Training. The county should support efforts to develop training programs to ensure a skilled labor force exists to meet the needs of the identified target businesses and industries.

*Policy 2:* Regional Efforts. Participate in regional efforts coordinated by the Shenandoah Valley Workforce Investment Board and the Shenandoah Valley Partnership to improve local workforce readiness.

*Policy 3:* Talent Recruitment. Support initiatives to recruit students who left Augusta County to come back home after college.

**Goal 4:** Identify key sites and ensure they have the physical infrastructure and site readiness necessary to be attractive to new businesses and industries.

**Objective A:** Provide adequate land and facilities for future business and industrial development.

*Policy 1:* Identify Sites. Identify the best economic development sites in varying sizes which are suitably located and which have adequate land, roads, and utilities to support business and industrial development. Ensure that economic development sites are served by adequate public facilities and infrastructure so as to offer “ready sites” that are competitively attractive for investment.

*Policy 2:* Major Employment and Investment Sites. Identify and preserve Major Employment and Investment Sites for regional growth and encourage the development of these sites for high tax revenue generating uses.

*Policy 3:* Investment. Invest in sites and buildings to increase the county readiness for business attraction and expansion. Continue efforts to develop “pad ready” sites in Mill Place Commerce Park and consider acquiring options on 2-3 key sites in the county.

*Policy 4:* Existing Buildings. Encourage the use and adaptive reuse of existing and vacant buildings for economic development.

*Policy 5: Private Efforts.* Assist private developers with the identification and development of appropriate areas for commercial or industrial facilities.

*Policy 6: Mixed Use Projects.* Promote the development of planned office centers, business and industrial parks, and mixed use centers.

*Policy 7: Airport.* Encourage appropriate development within and surrounding Shenandoah Valley Regional Airport that protects and promotes the use of the airport.

**Objective B:** Coordinate the provision of transportation and utility infrastructure in key economic development areas and invest, where necessary, in public facilities and infrastructure that supports economic development efforts.

*Policy 1: Weyers Cave Sewage Treatment Plant.* Develop plans and set aside funds for adding capacity for Weyers Cave.

*Policy 2: Transportation Access.* Connect economic development sites to countywide and regional transportation systems, including interstates and arterials, airports, and railways.

*Policy 3: Funding.* Explore the use of state and federal funding and innovative financing programs and structures, such as Virginia's Public-Private Transportation Act, Community Development Authorities and Major Employment and Investment funding to improve site readiness and infrastructure in key economic development areas.

*Policy 4: Rail.* Promote the economic development advantages of rail through the county and develop specific strategies to take advantage of rail services for economic development promotion.

*Policy 5: Multi-modal Improvements.* Encourage a range of multi-modal transportation options that link businesses to their labor force, customers, and adjacent communities and provide infrastructure improvements, such as bus shelters, where necessary.

*Policy 6: Broadband.* Encourage expansion of broadband services throughout the county.

**Goal 5:** Promote the county's unique historic, recreational, natural, and cultural resources as tourism assets that attract visitors from the region, state, and beyond.

**Objective A:** Encourage the development of eco- and agri- tourism.

*Policy 1: Cooperation.* Partner with neighboring localities and regional and state organizations to promote tourism in the region through programs such as Fields of Gold and the Staunton-Augusta-Waynesboro Artisans Trail, among others.

*Policy 2: Tourism.* Promote the local tourism industry, including the conservation of the agricultural, historic, and environmental resources that fuel it.

*Policy 3: Sports Tourism.* Explore the feasibility of establishing a sports tourism initiative through the development and enhancement of public and private recreation-related facilities that attract visitors, serve citizens, and support local businesses.

*Policy 4: Zoning.* Continue to provide flexible zoning tools to allow agricultural operations to accommodate tourists and tourist-related activities, festivals, and events.

**Goal 6:** Maintain the overall high quality of life in the county which serves as a major attraction for new employers and employees.

Objective A: Capitalize on the economic assets of the agricultural landscape, natural beauty, and historic resources.

*Policy 1: Agriculture.* The county should promote the continued and enhanced viability of the local agricultural industry, including innovative farming practices, new products, and support businesses. The county should continue to support and encourage the work of the Cooperative Extension Service in providing technical assistance to the local agricultural industry.

Objective B: Promote public and private funding of arts and cultural programs, recognizing these as positive contributors to tourism efforts and a high quality of life for county residents.

## ***D. Education***

**Goal 1:** Ensure that the county's public education facilities and services meet the needs of local residents by producing well educated students and graduates who are empowered to become life-long learners who are responsible, productive, and engaged citizens within a global community.

Objective A: The School Board should prepare, with public input, and adopt a strategic plan for the county's public education system. The strategic plan should consider the number and location of public school facilities to ensure that they are located efficiently and cost-effectively. All school facilities should

be upgraded to assure all community stakeholders have the opportunity to obtain the skills in order to thrive as 21<sup>st</sup> Century learners, employees, and citizens.

*Policy 1: Coordinated Planning Efforts.* The location of new and expanded school facilities should be coordinated with the land use policies of the county's Comprehensive Plan and with the planning, construction, and improvement of other public facilities in order to maximize efficiency and economies of scale while providing all individuals with 21<sup>st</sup> Century skills to meet global community expectations. The strategic plan should make recommendations on the best way to accomplish this.

*Policy 2: Capital Improvements.* Recommended school capital improvement projects should be proposed by a system to include real and projected enrollment figures, the age of the existing facilities, their remaining productive life and the ability to deliver special programs and 21<sup>st</sup> Century services to all students in the school. Consideration for placement of facilities should also consider travel time involved with getting students to and from school in the most efficient and economical manner, given the unique characteristics of Augusta County. The strategic plan should make recommendations on the best way to administer such a system.

*Policy 3: Development Impact on Enrollments.* Before approving rezonings and planned developments, the county should continue to consider their potential impact on the school system.

*Policy 4: Schools as Focal Points of Communities.* The strategic plan should recommend ways in which public school facilities can best serve as focal points of local communities and civic activities, while meeting the primary function of educating children.

*Policy 5: School Siting and Construction.* The strategic plan should make recommendations on planning, siting, and designing schools that are conveniently accessible, but continue to maintain a safe and secure environment. The county and School Board should consider sustainability and low-impact development designs in building new buildings and renovating existing buildings where practical.

*Policy 6: Pedestrian and Cycling Access to Schools.* The county should pursue grants from the Transportation Alternatives Program (formerly the Virginia Safe Routes to School Program) to infill pedestrian and cycling infrastructure to improve safety near elementary and middle schools where appropriate.

*Policy 7: Multi-Purpose Schools.* The strategic plan should make recommendations on ways to ensure that school facilities continue to be multi-purpose community facilities that benefit all county citizens and stakeholders, after the primary function of educating the children is met.

*Policy 8: Flexibility of Schools.* The strategic plan should make recommendations on ways in which school facilities can expand and contract in response to changing short-term needs.

**Objective B:** The School Board should prepare, with public input, and adopt a strategic plan for the county's public education system. The strategic plan should consider ways in which the public schools can provide the best possible 21<sup>st</sup> Century educational programs to ensure that they are established, maintained, and delivered in an efficient, equitable, and cost-effective manner that meet the demands of a progressive community.

*Policy 1: Curriculum.* The strategic plan should make recommendations on how the public schools can provide a rigorous, relevant, and diverse 21<sup>st</sup> Century curriculum.

*Policy 2: Continued Support of Local Educational Resources.* The strategic plan should analyze and recommend ways in which the county and the School Board can continue to encourage students to use fully the facilities and opportunities at Valley Career and Technical Center, the Shenandoah Valley Regional Governor's School, Blue Ridge Community College, and nearby colleges and universities.

*Policy 3: Staffing.* The strategic plan should recommend programs and indicators aimed at maintaining a competitive edge in attracting, hiring, and retaining highly qualified staff while continuing to provide positive staffing ratios in the classroom.

*Policy 4: Career and Technical Education Programs.* The strategic plan should explore and recommend, if appropriate, new career and technical education programs that will assist students in acquiring the education and experience needed to move into the workforce of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

*Policy 5: Technology in the Classroom.* The strategic plan should make recommendations on how the School Board can continue to improve the level of technology in the classrooms in order to comply with federal and state educational mandates. The division should explore a digital conversion model as appropriate.

*Policy 6: Continuing Education.* The strategic plan should analyze and recommend ways to increase the percentage of students continuing their education beyond the high school level.



*Policy 7: Graduation Rate.* The strategic plan should analyze and recommend ways to increase the percentage of students graduating from the county's high schools.

Objective C: The county should work with the School Board to ensure that the public education system is effectively administered in conjunction with overall county planning efforts in order to comply with federal and state educational mandates.

*Policy 1: Funding.* The county, in cooperation with the School Board, should continue efforts to pursue additional sources of revenue in order to fund the programmatic and capital needs of the school system.

*Policy 2: Monitor Trends.* The county, in cooperation with the School Board, should monitor trends in public and non-public enrollments, on a regional basis, to anticipate changes in demand for school facilities. Improving the data collection and management procedures for state reports and operational decisions should be a priority.

**Goal 2:** Foster the educational attainment of all county residents.

Objective A: Provide assistance to those children attending private schools or being homeschooled.

*Policy 1: Augusta County Library.* The county should continue to recognize the role that the public library plays in supporting the education of homeschool and private school students.

Objective B: Continue to support area colleges and adult education facilities in their efforts to provide post-secondary education, as well as vocational and enrichment opportunities for county residents.

*Policy 1: Blue Ridge Community College.* The county should continue to provide support to Blue Ridge Community College, especially their workforce development programs.

*Policy 2: Valley Career and Technical Center.* The county should continue to support the School Board's adult education efforts at Valley Career and Technical Center.

## ***E. General Government***

**Goal 1:** Manage the county's expenditures and investments so as to obtain maximum long-term efficiency and value from each dollar expended.

Objective A: Efficiently and effectively plan for the county's capital improvements. Maintain a low to moderate level of debt burden for county capital expenditures, consistent with state guidelines.

*Policy 1: Capital Improvements Program (CIP).* The county should develop, refine, and use its CIP as a planning and budgeting tool for all capital investment decisions. The CIP, based on the policies of the Comprehensive Plan, should be revised annually and should forecast capital expenditures for five year periods.

*Policy 2: Government Center Master Plan.* Prior to any future renovation and/or siting of new construction, the county should update prior master plans for the Government Center property which could include locations for regional, as well as county only, facilities. Such a study should include, but not be limited to, courts, fire/rescue and emergency communications, animal shelter, schools, and general governmental services.

*Policy 3: Service Plans.* The county should prepare agency service plans in order to specify the standards for service levels in key county programs. Service plans should be linked to the Comprehensive Plan and CIP, and should be updated on a regular basis with public involvement.

*Policy 4: Use of Technology.* Explore the innovative use of technology in order to yield greater efficiencies and have the potential of reducing additional building or facility needs.

Objective B: Coordinate the planning, funding, and delivery of all public facilities and services with the cities of Staunton and Waynesboro, as well as other applicable neighboring localities, so as to maximize economies of scale and minimize redundancies.

*Policy 1: Regional Planning Efforts.* The county should continue to participate in regional planning efforts such as the Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission and the Staunton-Augusta-Waynesboro Metropolitan Planning Organization.

*Policy 2: Coordinated Emergency Services Programs.* The county should continue to work with the cities of Staunton and Waynesboro to provide backup Emergency Communications Center coverage. The county should explore further options for coordinating the delivery of emergency services with the cities and the neighboring localities, including shared services agreements, and mutual aid agreements.

*Policy 3: Regional Educational Programs.* The county should continue to participate in regional educational programs such as Valley Career and

Technical Center and the Central Shenandoah Valley Regional Governor's School.

Objective C: Allocate new investments in public facilities and services within the county on the basis of population growth, and local demand/need, in accordance with Comprehensive Plan and Capital Improvements Program policies.

*Policy 1: Central and Local Facilities.* The county should balance the need to centralize as many facilities and services as possible for purposes of economy and efficiency with the need to disperse them for purposes of providing more localized service to all county residents.

*Policy 2: Combine Public Facilities.* When feasible and consistent with service delivery objectives, the county should locate compatible public facilities together on a shared site in order to minimize the costs of land and utilities and to provide maximum convenience to citizens.

Objective D: Actively work to increase the participation of citizen volunteers in the delivery of county services to the maximum degree feasible.

**Goal 2:** Manage the allocation of costs and benefits of public services in a fair and equitable manner.

Objective A: Maintain the lowest possible property tax burden necessary to provide a level of public facilities and services desired by county citizens and required in order to protect the public health and safety.

*Policy 1: Special Service Districts.* The county should examine the possibility of establishing special service districts and other innovative funding mechanisms to provide the funding for additional public facilities and services for particular areas of the county that desire such additional facilities and services.

Objective B: Ensure that all county residents equitably pay for resources that benefit all county residents.

*Policy 1: Funding Increased Development in Urban Areas.* The county should develop a strategy for ensuring that the infrastructure improvements that permit higher densities and promote economic growth in the Urban Service and Community Development Areas are funded by all county residents. Such a strategy should include considering making strategic investments in infrastructure, such as sewer trunk lines, to facilitate growth in key areas where there is a reasonable expectation for a return on the investment.

*Policy 2: Funding Agricultural Preservation Methods.* The county should develop a strategy for ensuring that the tools that work to preserve the agricultural nature of the Rural Conservation and Agricultural Conservation Areas are funded by all county residents.

Objective C: Utilize taxation methods that encourage the preservation of productive agricultural and forestal areas and open space while ensuring that the land is fairly and equitably assessed.

*Policy 1: Open Space.* The county should explore the possibility of including in the eligibility for the land use taxation program those parcels that have a significant open space value to the county.

**Goal 3:** The county will strive to be a good steward of the environment.

Objective A: Consider sustainability in building new, or renovating existing, public facilities.

*Policy 1: Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED).* The county will evaluate and consider constructing new buildings, and renovating existing buildings, to Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Certification standards.

*Policy 2: Replacement of Equipment.* The county will replace inefficient equipment in public facilities with energy efficient equipment, where practical.

*Policy 3: Low-Impact Development.* The county will utilize Low-Impact Development (LID) designs for newly constructed facilities, and for renovations of existing county facilities, where necessary and practical.

Objective B: Continue to support recycling and other “green” initiatives.

*Policy 1: Education.* The county will continue to offer environmental programs to the public including those about recycling, rain barrels, composting, and other “green” initiatives.

*Policy 2: Outreach Efforts.* The county will continue to participate in events such as the Augusta County Fair, Sweet Dreams, and Earth Day educating the public about recycling and other environmental initiatives.

Objective C: Strive to reduce gasoline, electricity, natural gas, and heating oil consumption in county facilities and vehicles.

*Policy 1: Energy Audits.* The county should implement the recommendations of the energy audits where economically feasible and strive to implement operational policies to be as efficient as possible.

*Policy 2: Purchasing of Vehicles.* When purchasing new public vehicles, the county should, to the extent practical and allowable, consider the gas efficiency, as well as the expected use and cost of the vehicle, when making purchasing decisions.

Objective D: Working with the School Board and Service Authority, strive to meet and/or exceed state and federal regulations pertaining to the handling of hazardous and non-hazardous materials on, and within, public facilities.

*Policy 1: Storage and Disposal.* Provide written procedures on how hazardous and non-hazardous material are to be stored and/or disposed within public facilities.

*Policy 2: Environmental Compliance Audits.* Conduct environmental compliance audits periodically to ensure management programs and procedures are being followed.

*Policy 3: Environmental Risk Management.* Work with public facilities to ensure any environmental risks are corrected in a timely manner and measures put into place to prevent reoccurrence.

## ***F. Historic Resources***

**Goal 1:** Identify and protect the basic physical integrity of the county's historic and prehistoric sites and structures.

Objective A: Support efforts to identify and preserve all of the county's significant historic and prehistoric sites and structures.

*Policy 1: Historic Districts.* The county should encourage the voluntary submission of proposals for local historic districts in areas which have a significant concentration of historically significant sites, or individual sites of special historic significance and along corridors which lead to historic areas.

*Policy 2: Historic Overlay Zoning District.* The county should consider establishing a historic overlay zoning district in the Zoning Ordinance. Such overlay districts could contain design guidelines for new construction in order to ensure compatibility of architectural form and materials.

*Policy 3: Preservation Plan.* As funding becomes available, the county should explore developing a separate historic preservation plan for its historic resources.

*Policy 4: Funding Sources.* The county should explore all available state and federal funding sources for historic preservation projects.

**Objective B:** Promote the preservation of historic resources through all available government, private business, or nonprofit options.

*Policy 1: Conservation Easements.* Encourage and promote the use of conservation easements in the Rural Conservation and Agricultural Conservation Areas to preserve land and structures of scenic and/or historic significance. Proposed easements for historic resources in the Urban Service and Community Development Areas should require approval of the Board of Supervisors.

*Policy 2: Coordinate Efforts.* Work with federal, state, regional, and neighboring local officials to coordinate and reinforce efforts to promote historic preservation efforts and programs.

*Policy 3: Civil War Battlefield Areas.* Encourage the continuing efforts of local residents in the Piedmont or other Civil War battlefield areas to organize voluntary measures to maintain agricultural and forestal land uses on the battlefield sites and the surrounding areas, and to otherwise preserve the battlefield areas.

*Policy 4: Certified Local Government Program.* The county should explore becoming a Certified Local Government as designated by the Virginia Department of Historic Resources.

*Policy 5: Taxation Policies and Incentives.* The county should examine the development of taxation policies and other financial incentives that are supportive of the preservation of historic resources.

**Goal 2:** Foster new development that is compatible in character with the county's historic resources.

**Objective A:** Guide new development so it is compatible with the county's historic and scenic character.

*Policy 1: Preservation in New Developments.* Through the development review process, work with developers and builders to encourage, where appropriate, the preservation of historic structures and sites and to incorporate them into the design of new development projects.

*Policy 2: Road Design.* Work closely with VDOT and developers to encourage flexibility in the design of new public roads and road improvements when needed to preserve significant historic features, structures, and sites. Modifications to curve radii, pavement width, and other standards may be necessary and appropriate in order to preserve the character and integrity of historic resources.

*Policy 3: Context-Sensitive Design.* The county should encourage any development that occurs in or near historic areas to incorporate creative and sensitive design so as to limit the visual impact on the surrounding area.

**Objective B:** Maintain the historic character of the county's rural towns and villages while encouraging their development as commercial and cultural centers.

*Policy 1: Adaptive Reuse.* Encourage the adaptive reuse and rehabilitation of existing historic structures for new and innovative uses, while retaining the integrity of the structure and the compatibility of the use with existing and planned neighboring land uses.

**Goal 3:** Foster public education and greater appreciation and understanding of historic and archaeological resources, and public support for preservation of those resources.

**Objective A:** Enhance local awareness and understanding of the county's historic resources and their relationship to the county's current culture and economy, as well as the tourism industry.

*Policy 1: Education.* Promote public and private education efforts about the county's historic resources and efforts to conserve them. Encourage public awareness efforts through the schools, the media, and local civic and business organizations.

*Policy 2: Tourism.* Foster a strong and complementary relationship between tourism promotion and historic preservation efforts. Encourage the promotion and awareness of the county's historic resources through the tourism industry development process. Consider developing a countywide heritage tourism program.

*Policy 3: Historic Resource Information.* Support efforts to compile and maintain a file, in the form of a GIS database, on local historic resources for use by citizens and by county and state agencies in the review of public and private plans and development proposals.

*Policy 4: Augusta County Historical Society.* Support the activities of the Augusta County Historical Society and other organizations as they seek to

study, collect, preserve, publish, educate, and promote the history of Augusta County and its communities.

## ***G. Housing***

**Goal 1:** Ensure the provision of a variety of housing types and values that will meet the needs of county residents.

Objective A: Help to ensure that the local housing market offers a range of housing densities, types and prices.

*Policy 1: Mixed Use Development.* In urban areas, encourage mixed use and mixed income developments which provide compact communities that can offer more convenient access to employment and shopping and more efficient and economical dwelling units at a somewhat higher than average density.

*Policy 2: Adaptive Reuse and Rehabilitation.* Encourage the adaptive reuse and rehabilitation of existing structures, including historic structures, in order to increase the opportunities for variety and economy in the housing stock. Analyze the county's stock of older multi-family housing complexes and seek alternative ways to use these existing buildings or funding sources to encourage the rehabilitation of the structures.

*Policy 3: "High value" Housing.* Encourage builders and developers to provide "high value" housing rather than simply "affordable" housing. To have maximum affordability, moderately-priced housing should be located and designed to be efficient, durable, close to work and shopping, and easily maintained so that it will appreciate in value over the course of time.

*Policy 4: Retiree and Elderly Housing.* Promote the development of housing to accommodate the growing retiree and elderly population. Encourage senior housing in locations that will provide the retirees and elderly with easy access to medical offices and facilities and shopping areas.

*Policy 5: Equal Access to Housing.* Continue working to provide equal access to all housing in the county, particularly at the neighborhood level.

*Policy 6: Ordinance Changes.* When evaluating proposed changes to the Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances, the county should consider the impact such changes might have on the balance of housing densities, types, and prices. Ordinance changes should be analyzed in terms of both initial costs to the developer, as well as the long-term costs to the homebuyer/renter and the county.



Objective B: Ensure the provision of an adequate supply of safe, suitable and affordable housing for all county residents of all income levels.

*Policy 1: Coordinate with Neighboring Jurisdictions.* The county recognizes that the housing market is regional in nature and therefore the issues of affordable housing should be approached from a regional perspective. The county should, therefore, undertake with Staunton and Waynesboro, a regional housing plan to analyze the housing needs of the region, including the need for affordable housing, as well as the feasibility of implementing new local and regional housing programs. The plan should evaluate methods to encourage the new construction of, as well as the rehabilitation and maintenance of existing, affordable housing units. Efforts to provide affordable housing should be monitored and reported back to the governing bodies.

*Policy 3: Community-Based Housing Initiatives.* Encourage public and private efforts to provide affordable housing and to rehabilitate substandard housing stock, including housing trust funds, cooperative housing projects, transitional housing, volunteer efforts, self-help groups, and apprentice programs. Efforts should include programs designed to provide housing for the handicapped and disabled including group homes and homes with universal design.

*Policy 4: Community Education.* Support the development of programs which offer technical and financial guidance regarding homeownership and home maintenance.

*Policy 5: Federal and State Programs.* Explore the further use of federal and state programs to help meet local housing needs, including Block Grants for housing rehabilitation and HUD Section 8 rental housing vouchers. Encourage local developers, builders, and financiers to participate in federal and state housing programs which target homeownership for low and moderate income families.

*Policy 6: Housing Trust Fund.* Explore the feasibility of establishing a local or regional housing trust fund, or other similar program, to assist in financing affordable housing efforts. Funding assistance could come from both public and private sources including the government programs and local businesses and industries. The trust fund could provide various forms of financial assistance including land and interest rate buy downs, second trust financing, and direct assistance for construction of affordable units.

*Policy 7: Housing Authority.* Explore the feasibility of establishing a local or regional housing authority, potentially in conjunction with either or both of the cities. Such an Authority could administer and coordinate a variety

of programs and initiatives to ensure an adequate supply of affordable housing for local citizens.

*Policy 8: Housing Code.* Examine the feasibility of adopting and administering the Property Maintenance Code to ensure the upgrading of existing, substandard and unsafe housing, including manufactured homes.

Objective C: Encourage the construction of good quality housing which provides a sound economic investment for the citizen and a tax base enhancement for the county.

**Goal 2:** Ensure that housing development occurs in a pattern which is efficient and affordable to the county taxpayers at large in terms of providing public facilities and services.

Objective A: Encourage housing development to locate in areas where adequate water and/or wastewater service is available, roads and schools have adequate capacity, and emergency services have adequate coverage.

*Policy 1: Rezoning Decisions Based on Planning Policy Area.* The county should ensure that all decisions on residential rezonings are compatible with the Planning Policy Area in which the rezoning request is located at the density envisioned by the Plan, supported by the available infrastructure, and compatible with adjacent development.

*Policy 2: Staunton and Waynesboro as Growth Areas.* The county should recognize the role of the cities as growth areas and should expect the cities to be centers of future development.

**Goal 3:** Ensure that new and existing residential areas are protected from conflicts with incompatible land uses and the county's agricultural and environmental resources are protected from conflicts with incompatible residential land uses.

Objective A: Discourage encroachment of residential land uses into areas that have good prospects for long-term farming or forestry activities.

*Policy 1: Residential Dwellings.* The county should examine the different methods available for restricting the number of new dwellings constructed in the Rural Conservation and Agricultural Conservation Areas and if built, minimizing the impact on existing and potential agricultural operations and natural resources.

Objective B: Promote development layouts that protect agricultural operations and natural and scenic resources by design.

*Policy 1: Preservation of Agriculture.* In the context of development proposals, the county should seek to preserve the viability of agriculture and forestry on the property in question as well as adjacent properties. Where clustering of dwellings is desired, consideration should be given to the use of the preservation tract so that it doesn't become a nuisance to the residential development, the agricultural neighbors, or the county.

## ***H. Human Services***

**Goal 1:** Maintain the current quality of public health and social services to residents of all ages and needs in the county, in conjunction and cooperation with local, state, and federal agencies.

Objective A: Protect citizens in at-risk situations from neglect, abuse, and exploitation.

*Policy 1: Youth and Teen Services.* The county should continue to focus efforts to meet the special needs of local youth through promoting cooperative and coordinated efforts of all public and private entities that serve children and young adults, including public and private schools, public safety agencies, social services, civic organizations, and local youth-oriented businesses. Services such as employment training, teen pregnancy prevention, substance abuse prevention, and juvenile offender programs should continue to receive county support. Incorporate leadership and volunteerism in teen programs in an effort to increase skill building and employability within the county. Include programs and services that build resiliency in at-risk youth and their families.

*Policy 2: Mental Health, Intellectual Disability, and Substance Abuse Services.* The county should support the mental health, intellectual disability, and substance abuse services provided by federal, state, and local government agencies as well as other programs provided by nonprofit organizations.

*Policy 3: Disability Services.* The county should support all government, private, and nonprofit programs that provide services to physically, behaviorally, and intellectually disabled individuals.

*Policy 4: Elderly Services.* The county should promote and support public and private services, projects, and policies which focus on assisting and involving senior citizens, including transportation assistance, housing assistance, adult day care, recreation and education programs, volunteer programs, and library services.

Objective B: Promote programs and conditions that support the development of healthy individuals and families.

*Policy 1: Health Department Programs.* The county should continue to support the Virginia Department of Health in its efforts to promote proper nutrition, immunizations, family planning, environmental health, cancer screening, and other public health programs.

*Policy 2: Social Services Programs.* The county should continue to support the Department of Social Services through such programs as Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Medicaid, Family Access to Medical Insurance Security (FAMIS), and other child and adult services.

*Policy 3: Income and Financial Literacy.* Support the development and expansion of programs that address income and financial literacy needs for youth, individuals, and families.

*Policy 4: Job Training.* Support job training and skills development opportunities that are both affordable and accessible, that could result in additional employment and volunteer opportunities for all persons, including those with disabilities.

*Policy 5: Economic Security.* Support human service programs that are working to increase the capacity of area residents to achieve economic security, which can be defined as the ability to meet basic needs: housing, utilities, food, transportation, childcare, household needs, health care & taxes plus savings for emergencies and the future.

Objective C: Facilitate partnerships that expand and improve services to better the condition of vulnerable youth and adults.

*Policy 1: Collaboration.* Support collaborative efforts, such as Project GROWS, to address human service needs

Objective D: Coordinate with state and federal agencies and programs, as well as with the cities, regional agencies, and neighboring localities to ensure that human service needs are adequately met.

*Policy 1: Support Effective Programs.* The county should support those programs which are cost-effective and have shown demonstrated effectiveness in achieving program goals.

*Policy 2: Funding.* Seek all available federal, state, and private sector funding to augment local funding of health and human services programs.

Objective E: Increase accessibility to the health and human services available in the county.

*Policy 1: Accessibility and Safety.* Ensure that the buildings used to house social service agencies are ADA compliant and meet security standards set by federal, state, and local governments for employees, clients, and records management. Ensure that the resources are available to provide services in the language spoken by the clients.

*Policy 2: Transportation.* Work with the Staunton-Augusta-Waynesboro MPO and service providers to improve public transportation service to community health and human services programs and facilities.

*Policy 3: Computer Literacy.* Partner with other agencies, including the area libraries, and the private sector to increase computer literacy among all county residents recognizing the growing trend towards computerization of service delivery in the human services field.

**Objective F:** Support the efforts of Community Action Partnership of Staunton, Augusta, and Waynesboro (CAPSAW) to address the programmatic needs of the region in a regional approach to maximize the efficiency of service delivery.

*Policy 1: Information and Referral.* Increase the information and referral services available in the county to ensure that all citizens have the access to the services and service providers best able to meet their needs.

*Policy 2: Interagency Task Force.* Consider the creation of an interagency Task Force to identify the efforts of all the human service providers in the region, identify the gaps and overlaps in service provision, and identify measures that could increase the effectiveness of service delivery.

## ***I. Land Use and Development***

**Goal 1:** Encourage a compact, orderly, and coordinated development pattern in the Urban Service and Community Development Areas

**Objective A:** Provide a convenient, safe, and efficient network of urban land uses.

*Policy 1: Development Pattern.* Encourage compact, mixed use, pedestrian-oriented communities which combine a range of residential unit types and densities with limited neighborhood commercial business uses in a convenient and coordinated pattern.

*Policy 2: Parcel Consolidation.* Encourage the consolidation of small tracts into larger tracts in order to facilitate the coordination of land development and the provision of adequate public facilities and amenities.

*Policy 3: Infill Development.* Encourage carefully designed development on vacant or under-used infill parcels.

*Policy 4: Unit Types.* Encourage a full range of dwelling unit types and densities in order to provide for all market segments in the community.

*Policy 5: Strip Development.* Discourage a “strip” business and industrial development pattern of multiple, closely-spaced road entrances along major road corridors so as to maintain visual harmony and avoid excess traffic congestion. This pattern can be prevented through the use of reverse frontage lots, by consolidating smaller parcels into larger, coordinated projects, and by consolidating road entrances to ensure the distance between commercial entrances meets the minimum spacing requirements of VDOT for the types of road and the speed limits envisioned for the area. Parking and loading areas should be encouraged to locate to the side and rear of commercial business and industrial buildings and should be screened from neighboring residential properties. Access from secondary collector roads rather than arterial roads should be encouraged. Industrial access roadways should be designed so that industrial traffic remains separated from residential traffic.

*Policy 6: Development around Interstate Interchanges.* The county should encourage development around the interchanges on Interstates 64 and 81 to proceed in an efficient pattern that allows for the efficient use of the road network. The county should prepare interchange area plans for these areas and should encourage the use of Mixed Use Districts in these areas. Design strategies outlined in the 2005 “Augusta County Design Principles” booklet should be encouraged in these areas.

*Policy 7: Development around Route 262 Loop.* The county should examine whether development should be encouraged to take place in the areas of the county west of Interstate 81, particularly in those areas along the Route 262 Loop around Staunton. If development is to occur, planning for these areas should include recommendations on the appropriate arrangements of land uses and the layout of the transportation network.

*Policy 8: Development in Areas with Limited Water and Sewer Capacity.* The county recognizes that there are portions of the Urban Service and Community Development Areas where the capacities of the water and sewer systems are limited. Efforts should be made to maximize the development on the public services, utilizing the remaining capacities without making extensive investment in the expansion of these systems. Once the capacities of these systems have been reached the expected development densities will decrease reflecting the absence of the public services.

*Policy 9: Location of Business Development.* Larger scale, regional, and community businesses and higher intensity business uses should be permitted only in areas designated for business use in the Urban Service Areas, where the majority of future population growth is expected to occur, and where the services and facilities necessary to support these businesses are located. Smaller scale, local neighborhood business uses may locate in the designated Urban Service Areas or Community Development Areas. Also, business uses may be permitted in areas designated Mixed Use on the Planning Policy Area/Future Land Use Map provided they are designed in such a manner that the different uses are fully compatible with each other.

*Policy 10: Location of Industrial Development.* Most industrial uses should be permitted only in areas planned for industrial development and located in Urban Service Areas, where the roads, utilities, and other necessary infrastructure are sufficient to support such uses. Areas designated for community mixed use may support light industrial uses compatible with the primary residential and commercial uses in the development. Natural resource industries which require particularly large buffer areas and which are generally compatible with agricultural and forestal activities may locate in the Urban Service and Community Development Areas only if compatible with existing and planned adjacent uses, otherwise these industries will be expected to locate in Rural Conservation and Agriculture Conservation Areas. Proposals for new industrial development or expansion should be evaluated in terms of the consistency and compatibility with the Planning Policy Area/Future Land Use Map and the other policies of this Plan as well as with the infrastructure available in the surrounding area.

Objective B: Increase the percentage of new residential units locating in the Urban Service Areas to 80% of all new residential development. Increase the percentage of new residential units locating in the Community Development Areas to 10%.

*Policy 1: Urban Service Area Residential Densities.* The density of developments in the Urban Service Area should be from three to sixteen units per acre. In general, maximum residential development densities in the Urban Service Areas, as identified on the Planning Policy Area/Future Land Use Map, will be as follows:

A: Medium Density Residential. Medium Density Residential areas should have densities between three and four dwelling units per net acre.

B: Single-Family Attached Residential. Single-Family Attached Residential areas should have densities between four and eight dwelling

units per net acre. Only attached residential units such as townhouses and duplexes should be encouraged in these areas.

C: Multifamily Residential. Multifamily Residential areas should have densities between nine and sixteen dwelling units per net acre. Only multifamily residential units should be encouraged in these areas.

D: Planned Residential. Areas designated Planned Residential should have densities of four to eight dwelling units per net acre. A variety of residential types should be encouraged in these areas.

E: Neighborhood Mixed Use. Areas designated Neighborhood Mixed Use may have a density of up to four to eight dwelling units per net acre devoted to residential uses. In addition to a variety of residential uses, these neighborhoods may have convenience retail and office uses on up to 20 percent of the total land area of the requested contiguous parcels in the neighborhood.

F: Community Mixed Use. Areas designated Community Mixed Use may have a density of up to six to twelve dwelling units per net acre devoted to residential uses. In addition to a variety of residential uses, on up to 40% of the total land area of the requested contiguous parcels in the neighborhood, there may be retail and office uses and in some, but not all, cases light industrial uses.

*Policy 2: Community Development Area Residential Densities.* The density of developments in the Community Development Areas should be limited to not more than one dwelling unit per net acre. In general, maximum residential development densities in the Community Development Areas, as identified on the Proposed Land Use Map, should be as follows:

A: Low Density Residential. Low Density Residential areas should have densities between one-half and one dwelling unit per net acre.

*Policy 3: Use of Incentives.* Consider the use of incentives to encourage development to occur in the Urban Service Areas and the Community Development Areas where public services are available.

*Policy 4: Rezoning Approvals.* Requests for changes in residential densities for specific sites should be evaluated in terms of the Planning Policy Area/Future Land Use Map, the pattern of existing development in the vicinity of the site, road access, and available and planned public facilities.



*Policy 5: Role of Cities in Absorbing New Residential Development.* The county should continue to recognize the role of Staunton and Waynesboro in absorbing new residential development in the region.

*Policy 6: Villages.* Encourage any new development in and adjacent to the county's villages, such as Churchville, Greenville, and Middlebrook, to conform to the established development pattern in the community. Work with VDOT to determine how any transportation expansions or improvements can be designed to conform to the existing pattern. Parcels in villages with public water and/or sewer service may have a land use designation of Village Mixed Use on the Planning Policy Area/Future Land Use Map where uses compatible with the existing development pattern in the community will be encouraged. The county should explore the feasibility of initiating a rezoning for these communities to Village Mixed Use to allow for a mixture of business and residential uses to continue and new development to occur which is compatible with the existing development.

Objective C: Prevent conflicts between residential, business, and industrial land uses as well as agricultural uses located in adjacent Rural Conservation and Agricultural Conservation Areas.

*Policy 1: Buffers.* The county should encourage that adequate buffers be provided on each site to provide protection and transition between uses of differing densities or intensities. Buffers should use existing topography and vegetation to the maximum extent possible but should provide additional buffer materials, such as walls, fences, berms, or additional landscaping, wherever necessary to provide adequate visual protection between adjacent properties.

Business and industrial developments should be encouraged to provide adequate landscape or topographic buffers and screening between the business or industrial use and any existing or planned adjacent non-business or industrial uses.

*Policy 2: Transitions.* Medium Density Residential uses should generally serve as transitions between lower and higher density residential uses. Higher density residential uses should serve as transitions between business and industrial uses and lower density residential uses. Low and Medium Density Residential uses should serve as transitions between higher intensity uses and agricultural uses located in adjacent Rural Conservation and Agricultural Conservation Areas. Similar uses and intensities should generally front each other across local and collector roads. Uses should gradually change at the side and rear property boundaries, or across major arterial roads. Reverse lot frontage should be used wherever possible.

*Policy 3: Mixed Use Development.* A mixture of residential, business, and, as applicable, industrial uses should be encouraged in areas designated Planned Residential, Neighborhood Mixed Use, Community Mixed Use, and Village Mixed Use on the Planning Policy Area/Future Land Use Map. Mixed use developments may include a mixture of residential uses, a mixture of residential and business uses, or some other combination. Developments that incorporate a mixture of uses should be designed in such a manner that conflicts between different uses can be minimized.

Objective D: Enhance the character of the urban environment.

*Policy 1: Small Area Plans.* The county should continue to develop a series of small area plans, similar to the plan created for Fishersville, for the portions of the Urban Service and Community Development Areas that require additional detailed planning efforts as well as a series of interchange area plans for those Interstate interchanges that require additional attention. Recommendations should include the layout of the transportation network, infrastructure improvements, the appropriate arrangement of land uses, and designation of appropriate areas for public facilities such as schools, parks, fire and rescue stations, libraries, and other civic uses.

*Policy 2: Neighborhood Identity.* Create new neighborhoods with a clear visual identity and sense of place.

*Policy 3: Public Facilities.* Schools, parks, community centers, and other public facilities should be located and designed so as to provide a focus for urban neighborhoods and communities, with clear visual identities and convenient access for pedestrians as well as vehicles.

*Policy 4: Existing Features.* Existing natural and cultural features should provide the framework for the design and development of any site. Existing topography, woodlands and natural drainage channels should be preserved to the maximum extent possible as new urban areas are developed. Clearing and grading should be kept to a minimum through the use of clustering, flexible street design standards, phased development, carefully designed and managed shared parking, and similar techniques. New development should be discouraged from steep slopes in excess of 25% grade. Existing historic structures should be preserved and integrated into new development as an identifying feature of a project.

*Policy 5: Design Guidelines.* Consider changes to the county's development regulations to encourage new development to incorporate the design strategies outlined in the 2005 "Augusta County Design Principles" booklet including changes to the regulations on parking, landscaping, pedestrian access, and lighting. Changes to the county's code should be

developed working cooperatively with property owners, the development community, conservation groups, and residents.

*Policy 6: Urban Open Space.* The county should encourage the use of open space preservation programs, such as conservation easements, in the Urban Service and Community Development Areas for recreational, open space, source water protection and natural resource preservation purposes. The utilization of any such programs in these areas would require approval by the Board of Supervisors and may require allowances for additions and improvements to water and wastewater lines, public roads, and other identified infrastructure needs. The Urban Open Space category on the Planning Policy Area/Future Land Use Map should be used to identify existing open space, recreational, and preservation sites within the Urban Service and Community Development Areas. As additional land is preserved in these areas, it should be identified on the Planning Policy Area/Future Land Use Map as Urban Open Space.

Objective E: Maintain and enhance the safety and capacity of the urban transportation system.

*Policy 1: Road Access.* Encourage residential subdivisions to be designed with an internal focus and internal, reverse lot road frontage, rather than “stripping” the existing state highways. All residential subdivisions should be discouraged from having a single point of entry onto collector roads.

*Policy 2: Traffic Calming and Streetscapes.* Calm vehicle traffic within communities and near schools with pedestrian-oriented street design. Design strategies such as buildings located at minimum setback distances, on-street parking, and streetscaping amenities such as sidewalks, street trees, benches, and lighting should be encouraged where appropriate.

*Policy 3: Commercial Entrances.* Encourage commercial developments to limit the number of commercial entrances to their site from arterial and collector roads and to facilitate vehicular and pedestrian movement between adjacent sites.

*Policy 4: Pedestrian and Bike Accommodations.* Consider the inclusion of bicycle and pedestrian accommodations for all new road projects, as well as during the site development process for all public and private projects.

Objective F: Provide efficient suitable land area to meet the economic development goals of the county.

**Goal 2:** Maintain the county’s predominantly rural character, including the small towns and villages.

Objective A: Reduce the number and size of new residential lots being created in the Rural Conservation and Agricultural Conservation Areas. Reduce the percentage of residential lots in rural areas from over 50% to less than 10% of all new residential lots.

*Policy 1: Lot Size.* Encourage rural residential development to occur with a minimum individual lot size of two acres for conventional subdivisions and one acre for clustered subdivisions.

*Policy 2: Subdivision Regulations.* Continue to examine possible amendments to the subdivision regulations that would assist the county in reducing the amount of new residential development taking place in the Rural Conservation and Agricultural Conservation Areas.

*Policy 3: Rezonings.* In the Rural Conservation Areas, the county should encourage any rezonings to Rural Residential and Rural Conservation to be located and designed as incremental additions to existing communities.

Objective B: Provide sufficient incentives and protections for agricultural land uses so as to lose no more than 5% of the current total acreage of farmland in the Rural Conservation and Agricultural Conservation Areas over the next 20 years.

*Policy 1: Agricultural and Forestal Districts.* The county should study the feasibility and effectiveness of incentives to encourage the creation and support of additional Agricultural and Forestal Districts in the Agricultural Conservation and Rural Conservation Areas as well as to support the continuation of the existing Districts.

*Policy 2: Conservation Easements.* The county should support and encourage the placement of conservation easements on property located in the Rural Conservation and Agricultural Conservation Areas. Proposed easements within a ½ mile of significant public facilities such as, but not limited to, the Shenandoah Valley Regional Airport or Blue Ridge Community College should be reviewed by the Board of Supervisors, with input from the impacted agencies, to determine the appropriateness of the proposed easement and the potential impact on the public facility.

*Policy 3: Zoning Ordinance Review.* Periodically study the effectiveness of the county's zoning regulations in protecting all types of agricultural land uses including production agriculture.

Objective C: Locate at least 90% of all new residential development in the Rural Conservation and Agricultural Conservation Areas either in small clusters or at the edges of existing developments, so as to cause minimal disruption of the rural landscape and agricultural operations.

*Policy 1: Unit Types.* The county should allow only single family detached dwellings in the rural areas. Permit accessory dwelling units where appropriate.

*Policy 2: Clustering of Dwellings in the Rural Conservation Areas.* In the designated Rural Conservation Areas, the county should encourage the clustering of new dwellings so as to preserve 80% of the parent tract in permanent open land. Consideration should be given to the use of the preservation tract so that it doesn't become a nuisance to the residential development, the agricultural neighbors, or the county. The county should require conventional residential subdivisions to have a minimum lot size of two acres, with overall densities of the rezoned property, of one dwelling per five acres.

*Policy 3: Dwellings in the Agricultural Conservation Areas.* The county should discourage rural cluster developments as well as conventional residential rezonings and subdivisions in the designated Agricultural Conservation Areas.

*Policy 4: Rural Communities.* Encourage any new development in and adjacent to the county's rural communities to conform to the established development pattern in the community. Work with VDOT to determine how any transportation expansions or improvements can be designed to conform to the existing pattern.

Objective D: Prevent conflicts between residential, business, and industrial land uses and agricultural land use activities.

*Policy 1: Siting of Dwellings.* Consider the use of "building area" designations on individual lots in all rural developments in order to provide maximum residual open land and maximum separation between neighboring farm activities and other land uses.

*Policy 2: Non-Residential Development.* Limited, compatible, small scale, rural business uses may locate in the designated Rural Conservation and Agricultural Conservation Areas if adequate buffers between adjacent properties, road access, and on-site well and sewage disposal are sufficient to ensure long term public health and safety. Compatible rural home business and home occupation uses should be accommodated in the rural areas. Natural resource industries which require particularly large buffer areas and which are generally compatible with agricultural and forestal activities may locate in the Agricultural Conservation Areas, contingent upon the industry providing adequate road access and protection of existing environmental resources.

Objective E: Maintain the scenic character of the rural environment.

*Policy 1: Environmental Features.* Encourage residential development located in the Rural Conservation and Agricultural Conservation Areas to be sited so as to protect and preserve existing environmental features including streams, and views, to the maximum extent possible, for the benefit of both new and existing residents. Clearing and grading should be kept to a minimum through the compact siting of streets and lots. Existing topography and vegetation, including tree lines, hedgerows, and stream channels should be preserved and used as the basic framework for new development. New Development should be discouraged from steep slopes in excess of 25% grade.

*Policy 2: Buffers.* Encourage dwellings located in the Rural Conservation and Agricultural Conservation Areas to be screened from existing state roads by existing or planted vegetative buffers, or by existing hills or ridges. Encourage the sensitive and creative use of existing topography and vegetation to provide buffers between new rural dwellings and existing roads and neighboring farms.

*Policy 3: Ridgeline Development.* New development should be discouraged from ridgelines.

Objective F: Maintain the safety and capacity of the rural road system.

*Policy 1: Roads.* Require all lots in Rural Residential subdivisions to be served by public roads accepted into the VDOT system. Where private roads are permitted in Rural Conservation districts ensure that they are built and maintained to safely accommodate emergency vehicles and connections to the public road system are limited. In addition, where private roads are permitted, ensure that the roads are permanently maintained at no cost to the county.

*Policy 2: Road Access.* Discourage direct access to arterial and collector roads from individual lots. Encourage residential subdivisions to be designed with an internal focus and internal, reverse lot road frontage, rather than “stripping” the existing state highways.

*Policy 3: Flexibility in Road Design.* Encourage VDOT to be flexible in its standards for new rural roads in terms of vertical and horizontal curvatures in order to allow developers to preserve existing topography and vegetation.

*Policy 4: Rural Rustic Road Program.* Continue to utilize the Rural Rustic Road program and other VDOT programs as appropriate to improve public roads while maximizing cost efficiency and maintaining the rural character of the area.

**Goal 3:** Keep the cost of providing public services and facilities to a minimum.

Objective A: Location of New Development. Guide the location of new development towards a pattern which facilitates the efficient provision of public services and facilities and a balance of compatible land uses and communities in which people can live, work, and play.

*Objective B:* Water and Sewer. Public water and sewer facilities should not be provided or extended to the designated Rural Conservation or Agricultural Conservation Areas during the timeframe of this Plan, except when necessary to mitigate an imminent and severe public health hazard. At such time as that public water or sewer service is extended to these areas they should be re-designated Community Development Areas, unless the board decides otherwise.

**Goal 4:** In regulating development, ensure that the overall, long-term common good of the community is kept in balance with the freedom and rights of the individual landowner.

## ***J. Library***

**Goal 1:** Establish and maintain library facilities that provide efficient, effective, and readily available service to all county residents in accordance with Planning for Library Excellence: Standards for Virginia Public Libraries.

Objective A: Strive to provide library facilities that are inviting places, conveniently located, and with a wealth of resources that appeal to all county residents.

*Policy 1:* Library Facilities and Service Delivery. The county should continue to use the Main Library in Fishersville as its major facility, supplemented by the Churchville Library and the library stations in Craigsville, Deerfield, and Middlebrook.

*Policy 2:* Physical Condition. Make all library facilities clean, safe, attractive, in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, and adaptable to new technologies.

*Policy 3:* Common Space. Provide meeting room facilities that are of adequate size, have the necessary technology, and are safe and accessible for the wide variety of public activities that are conducted in library facilities.

**Objective B:** Continue strategic and long-range planning to guide the Augusta County Library Board and staff in the provision of modern library services to all citizens. Obtain the endorsement of the Board of Supervisors for all plans.

*Policy 1:* Strategic and Technology Plans. Create a Strategic/Long Range Plan and a Technology Plan and evaluate annually.

*Policy 2:* Facility Plan. Develop a Facility Plan to direct where expansions and upgrades are necessary, where new sites should be developed, and how services should be expanded to underserved areas including recommendations on innovative service delivery.

**Objective C:** Achieve A status and strive to achieve AA status in all categories in the Planning for Library Excellence standards during the course of the next five to ten years and consider the feasibility of maintaining those service levels as the population grows.

**Goal 2:** Strive to provide exceptional public library services and programs for citizens of all ages.

**Objective A:** Explore opportunities to expand and enhance the programming available through the public library system.

*Policy 1:* Changing Demographics. The library should be prepared to respond to changes in the county's demographic make-up, particularly the anticipated growth in both immigrant and elderly populations and work to increase outreach efforts and service delivery to these groups.

*Policy 2:* Targeted Populations. Enhance services to targeted populations including teens/young adults, seniors, and persons whose first language is not English.

*Policy 3:* School Libraries and Public Libraries. The Library should continue to support the education of public, private, and homeschooled students. The library collections should supplement the materials found in the school libraries and support the curriculum and the Virginia Standards of Learning.

*Policy 4:* Partnerships. The library should continue to develop partnerships with other public and private sector agencies and groups to provide library services and increase outreach efforts.

*Policy 5:* Interdepartmental Collaboration. The library should explore opportunities to expand collaborative efforts for program delivery with other county departments.



*Policy 6: Coordinate Efforts and Resources.* The library system should continue to cooperate with neighboring libraries including the Valley Libraries Connection in sharing materials, technology, and services. Economies of scale that may be achieved through further sharing or combining of resources should be explored.

*Policy 7: Talking Book Center.* Continue to support the Talking Book Center.

Objective B: Expand and enhance the technology services available throughout the library system, recognizing the library's expanding role of providing a "bridge over the digital divide".

*Policy 1: Technology.* Maintain and upgrade the technology available at all the library facilities.

*Policy 2: Training.* Continue to ensure that library staff is trained to provide service to library patrons and stay current with new technologies.

*Policy 3: Programming.* Continue to offer computer and technology training to seniors and other target populations who may not have access to other training options.

Objective C: Advocate on behalf of library services available to county residents.

*Policy 1: Publicity.* Increase efforts to publicize library services and programs. Continue to utilize the website, social media, brochures, and other means available to publicize library services.

*Policy 2: Advocacy.* Improve advocacy for library services and programs.

Objective D: Obtain the resources needed to meet the library's strategic directions, mission statement, goals, and objectives.

*Policy 1: The Friends of the Library.* Support The Friends of the Augusta County Library with their marketing, fundraising, and promotional efforts.

*Policy 2. Funding Sources.* The library should explore additional state, federal, and private sector funding sources for library projects.

*Policy 3. Additional staffing.* Continue working with SCEP, Office on Youth, Woodrow Wilson Rehabilitation Center, VIEW, and other programs and agencies to offer training and internship programs to their clients while augmenting staffing levels at the library facilities.

## ***K. Natural Resources***

**Goal 1:** Protect the fundamental integrity of the county's natural environmental systems into the long-term future for the enjoyment and benefit of local citizens, businesses, tourism, and recreation.

Objective A: Protect the water, air, natural systems, and water supplies of Augusta County.

Objective B: Protect the natural and scenic beauty of the county's mountains and rural landscapes.

Objective C: Protect the county's forests and special and distinctive habitats.

Objective D: Participate in state and regional programs to protect local waterways, the James and Shenandoah Rivers, and the Chesapeake Bay.

*Policy 1: Easements & Land Protection.* Promote other conservation easement and land acquisition programs. Land protection techniques could be targeted to active agricultural lands, large and interconnected forest patches, natural heritage conservation sites and unique natural features, important scenic vistas, and important stream valleys.

*Policy 2: Chesapeake Bay TMDL.* Develop and implement a Chesapeake Bay TMDL Action Plan in accordance with the county's MS4 permit. For areas outside of the county's MS4 boundary, work with the Department of Conservation & Recreation's Shenandoah Valley Office to identify, prioritize, and implement appropriate measures in the Chesapeake Bay TMDL that also fulfill the goals and objectives noted in this Comprehensive Plan. Seek grant and in-kind funding to implement demonstration projects and innovative practices.

*Policy 3: Economic Benefits.* Inform the citizens and decision-makers about the economic benefits provided by the county's natural resources. Compile data on the direct and indirect economic benefits from prime farmland, forestry, tourism, recreation, water supply, water quality, and flood control that are made possible by the county's natural resources base. Communicate these benefits effectively so that natural resources issues can be considered fairly in land use and growth discussions.

*Policy 4: Natural Resources GIS.* Link to published map services provided by others to develop a natural resources geographic information system (GIS) as part of the county's existing GIS capabilities. The purpose of the natural resources GIS would be to have data readily available for comprehensive planning, development review, and education and outreach. Various federal, state, regional, and local agencies already maintain GIS

layers, but there is currently no one agency that integrates all the layers that are relevant to the county.

Layers most useful to the county include: impervious cover (derived from CAMA), forest cover and wildfire risk areas from the Virginia Department of Forestry, protected lands and the Conservation Lands Needs Assessment from the Department of Conservation & Recreation, natural heritage resources from DCR, karst features from the Division of Mineral Resources, leaking underground storage tanks from the Department of Environmental Quality, impaired streams from DEQ, dams subject to Dam Safety Regulations from DCR and the Army Corps of Engineers, and dam breach inundation zones from Headwaters SWCD and other dam operators.

**Goal 2:** Promote efficient and effective stormwater strategies appropriate to each Policy Area to protect water quality and control flooding.

Objective A: Develop watershed-based stormwater plans for the MS4 area and remaining Urban Service Areas (USAs) that allow efficient land development while protecting water quality and controlling stormwater quantity that can damage downstream stream channels and property.

*Policy 1: Prioritized List.* Create a prioritized list of the MS4 area and the remaining USA watershed-based stormwater plans so that the county can pursue these plans in an incremental fashion.

A: Content of Plans. Each plan should include: an inventory of existing stormwater facilities and problem areas, a study of options to retrofit stormwater practices to provide nutrient reductions in accordance with the TMDL implementation plans within existing developments, an assessment of new regional or subregional facilities, an assessment of on-site stormwater measures (including Low-Impact Development) needed to supplement regional facilities, an assessment of non-engineered approaches (such as floodplain restoration), and likely funding sources and cost-allocation strategies. These plans should acknowledge the intention to achieve density within the USAs as a means of reducing development in the rural areas.

B: Conduct Plans through Partnerships. The county should seek partnerships to carry out, finance, and implement the plans. Potential partners include: Headwaters Soil & Water Conservation District, Virginia Department of Conservation & Recreation, private businesses and developers, and the cities of Waynesboro and Staunton.

*Policy 2: Policies for Pro-Rata Share & Other Funding Systems.* Existing County Code allows pro-rata share contributions for areas subject to a “general drainage improvement program.” The county should establish

policies and procedures for implementing pro-rata share and other systems to fund watershed-based stormwater plans for the MS4 Area and the remaining USAs. The county should also pursue public/private partnerships to implement these plans.

Objective B: Continue to develop strategies to control stormwater quality and quantity in all Policy Areas. Particular strategies may be amended in the USAs, pending the completion of particular watershed-based stormwater plans noted in Objective A.

*Policy 1: Demonstration Projects.* Seek to demonstrate LID techniques on new public and private projects as an outreach and learning tool. Seek grant funding to help defray design and construction costs.

*Policy 2: State Stormwater Regulations.* Keep abreast of changes to stormwater regulations at the state level, and modify county ordinances and programs to be consistent with state programs.

*Policy 3: MS4 Program.* Continue to develop and improve the MS4 program to be consistent With State & Federal Guidelines.

A. Continue to develop the MS4 program with the required minimum elements of the Federal and Virginia programs applicable to municipal separate storm sewer systems (MS4s). These program elements include: (1) public education and outreach, (2) public participation, (3) illicit discharge detection and elimination, (4) construction stormwater management, (5) post-construction stormwater management, and (6) pollution prevention and good housekeeping at municipal operations.

B. Conduct program through partnerships. Work with the Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission and neighboring localities on any and all of the elements listed in A. above where regional efforts may serve to reduce costs or provide consistency between programs.

Objective C: Encourage natural, cost-effective solutions to flood control and stormwater management in all Policy Areas.

*Policy 1: Policy on Natural Solutions.* Establish policies in the stormwater, zoning, and subdivision regulations that provide incentives for naturalized and revegetated floodplains, riparian buffers, and natural channel stream restoration. Incentives that can be considered include: density bonuses, stormwater credits (partial waiver of on-site requirements), recognition as “Clean Water Sites,” and possible cost-share funds.

**Goal 3:** Promote development layout that protects natural and scenic resources by design.

**Objective A:** Adopt development design standards, known as performance standards, that can be applied to projects subject to rezoning requests, special use permits, and other non-administrative approvals (with the exception of any agricultural and forestry activities). The Performance Standards Table (see Policy 1 below) can serve as a guideline. It is not expected that every development design will incorporate all of the natural resources features in the table. County staff and the developer should consider the most salient natural resources features for each development site.

**Objective B:** Consider adopting performance standards that can be incorporated into the zoning and subdivision ordinances, and which would apply to all development applications. Consider making the standards mandatory in the Rural Conservation and Agricultural Conservation Areas, while maintaining flexibility in the Urban Service and Community Development Areas.

*Policy 1: Performance Standards Table*

<b>Natural Resources Feature</b>	<b>Urban Service Area</b>	<b>Community Development Area</b>	<b>Rural Conservation Area</b>	<b>Agricultural Conservation Area</b>
<b>Riparian Buffers</b>	35 feet on either side of stream. To extent feasible, make sure that impervious areas do not short-circuit buffers (e.g., carried in pipe through buffer)	35 feet on either side of stream; ensure that impervious areas do not short-circuit buffer.	100 feet on either side of stream or limit of floodplain (wider of the two); ensure that impervious areas do not short-circuit buffer.	100 feet on either side of stream or limit of floodplain (wider of the two); ensure that impervious areas do not short-circuit buffer.
<b>Floodplains</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No habitable structures</li> <li>• Develop greenways &amp; recreation areas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No habitable structures</li> <li>• Develop greenways &amp; recreation areas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No development or filling in floodplain</li> <li>• Develop small-scale trails</li> <li>• Promote reforestation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No development or filling in floodplain</li> <li>• Promote reforestation</li> </ul>

Natural Resources Feature	Urban Service Area	Community Development Area	Rural Conservation Area	Agricultural Conservation Area
<b>Flood Control Dam Inundation Zones</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allow expansions to existing development with education and possible mitigation measures</li> <li>• For new residential development, locate habitable structures outside of zone if reasonable alternatives exist</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allow expansions to existing development with education and possible mitigation measures</li> <li>• For new residential development, locate habitable structures outside of zone if reasonable alternatives exist</li> </ul>	No habitable structures if reasonable alternatives exist	No habitable structures if reasonable alternatives exist
<b>Natural Heritage Resources &amp; Critical Habitat</b>	<p>Preserve in open space to the extent feasible.</p> <p>Work with DCR on conservation management plans</p>	<p>Preserve in open space to the extent feasible.</p> <p>Work with DCR on conservation management plans</p>	<p>Preserve through cluster design</p> <p>Work with DCR on conservation management plans</p>	<p>Preserve through development layout and adequate lot sizes</p> <p>Work with DCR on conservation management plans</p>
<b>Slopes</b>	Avoid slopes > 25%, especially associated with stream valleys	Avoid slopes > 25%, especially associated with stream valleys	Set aside slopes > 25% and ridgelines through cluster design	No grading, roads, building sites on slopes > 25% and ridgelines
<b>Source Water Protection Areas</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Restrict land uses that pose contaminant threat</li> <li>• Avoid stormwater practices that infiltrate or can contaminate groundwater; ensure adequate water quality treatment</li> <li>• Encourage revegetation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preserve as open space to the extent feasible</li> <li>• Restrict land uses that pose contaminant threat</li> <li>• Avoid stormwater practices that infiltrate or can contaminate groundwater; ensure adequate water quality treatment</li> <li>• Encourage revegetation</li> <li>• Provide enhanced on-site sewage disposal system design</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Set aside critical areas through cluster design</li> <li>• Encourage reforestation</li> <li>• Provide enhanced on-site sewage disposal system design</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limit clearing on lots to minimum necessary</li> <li>• Encourage reforestation</li> <li>• Provide enhanced on-site sewage disposal system design</li> </ul>

Natural Resources Feature	Urban Service Area	Community Development Area	Rural Conservation Area	Agricultural Conservation Area
<b>Wetlands</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Obtain all required federal and state permits</li> <li>Provide 35 foot buffer from edge of wetlands</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Obtain all required federal and state permits</li> <li>Provide 35 foot buffer from edge of wetlands</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Obtain all required federal and state permits</li> <li>Provide 100 foot buffer from edge of wetlands</li> <li>Provide enhanced water quality treatment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Obtain all required federal and state permits</li> <li>Provide 100 foot buffer from edge of wetlands</li> <li>Provide enhanced water quality treatment</li> </ul>
<b>Unique Natural Features (e.g., caves, major karst features, critical habitat)</b>	Tie in with greenways, active and passive recreation, and floodplain preservation	Tie in with greenways, active and passive recreation, and floodplain preservation	Use cluster design to protect the features listed in this table to the extent achievable, as well as active agricultural and forestry uses	Provide open space amenities through development layout and lot sizes; maximize continued use of active agricultural and forestry areas

**Goal 4:** Sustain the natural resources base that allows for productive, healthy, and environmentally-sound agricultural and forestry land uses.

Objective A: In the Rural Conservation and Agricultural Conservation Areas, adopt policies and incentives to maintain parcel sizes that allow for meaningful agricultural and forestry operations.

*Policy 1:* Easements. Support conservation easement programs. Land protection techniques should be targeted to active agricultural lands, large and interconnected forest patches, and natural resources and natural heritage resources.

*Policy 2:* Resolve Tax Conflicts. Study and resolve any tax incentive conflicts between enrollment in an Agricultural and Forestal District and placement of property in conservation easements. The county should investigate state-authorized incentives for preservation of agricultural and forestry lands.

*Policy 3:* Promote Forestry on Private Land. Promote woodlots and sound forestry management on large parcels of land outside of the county’s public land (national forest and national park) to sustain a healthy forestry economy and to help protect water quality and game and non-game wildlife.

*Policy 4:* Development Layout. In the context of development proposals, the county should seek to preserve the viability of agriculture and forestry on the property in question as well as adjacent properties. Cluster designs

in the RCA and lot configurations in the ACA should consider this a paramount design objective.

**Objective B:** Promote agricultural and forestry operations that protect water quality and natural resources.

*Policy 1:* Agricultural Best Management Practices (BMPs) and Resource Management Plans. Work with partner agencies, including the Headwaters SWCD and the Natural Resources Conservation Service, to promote agricultural BMPs and nutrient management and resource management planning.

*Policy 2:* Forestry BMPs & Management Plans. Work with partner agencies, including the Virginia Department of Forestry, to promote forest management plans and forestry BMPs.

*Policy 3:* BMP Incentives. Consider providing incentives for agricultural and forestry BMPs whereby landowners that implement BMPs are offered tax or other financial incentives.

*Policy 4:* National Forest Management Plans. Continue to work with the U.S. Forest Service to promote the county's interests during any future revisions of the George Washington/Thomas Jefferson National Forest Management Plans.

**Objective C:** Raise citizen and landowner awareness about land protection and possible conflicts with agriculture and forestry.

*Policy 1:* Land Preservation Outreach. The county should develop a brochure that outlines the various land preservation programs and how landowners can access key information and resources.

*Policy 2:* Targeted Outreach Materials. The county should develop brochures and outreach materials that can be distributed with building permits or by other means to raise awareness for people living in, or moving to, the county's rural areas. Outreach can be targeted to residential developments within the Rural Conservation and Agricultural Conservation Areas, adjacent to Agricultural and Forestal Districts, and within the Woodland Home Communities and Wildland/Urban Interface Areas identified by the Virginia Department of Forestry. Information can include what to expect from active agricultural and forestry operations, ways to protect water quality and wildlife habitat on rural residential properties, and methods to reduce risk from wildfires. The county should collaborate in this task with organizations and agencies such as the Department of Forestry, the Headwaters SWCD, and the Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission.



**Goal 5:** Protect the quality and quantity of groundwater as the primary source of drinking water for county residents and as a source of water to springs and headwater streams.

Objective A: Continue to work with the Augusta County Service Authority (ACSA) to develop wellhead protection strategies to apply to existing and future water supply sources that serve the Urban Service and Community Development Areas.

*Policy 1: Source Water Protection.* The county should continue to work with the Augusta County Service Authority to adopt new Source Water Protection Overlay districts as new public water supplies are actively developed and the hydrogeological studies defining the groundwater recharge areas for existing and future public water supplies are completed.

Objective B: Protect the quality and quantity of groundwater that serves private, individual wells and provides source water to springs and headwater streams.

*Policy 1: On-Site Sewage Disposal System Maintenance.* Encourage proper use and maintenance of all on-site sewage disposal systems, including septic systems, through education and outreach. Educational materials should be distributed with building permits for properties that will use wells and on-site sewage disposal systems. Seek additional grants and encourage landowner participation in existing programs providing funding for inspection and pump-out of existing on-site sewage disposal systems.

*Policy 2: Mandatory Pump-Out of Septic Systems.* Consider a mandatory septic pump-out program adapted from the requirements of the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act and Regulations.

*Policy 3: Performance Standards.* Use performance standards for development to protect forest stands, land covers, and karst features that are important for groundwater recharge.

*Policy 4: Standards for Cluster Designs.* Primarily in the Rural Conservation Areas, provide standards for the safe provision of water and wastewater in cluster development.

**Goal 6:** Protect the citizens, property, and natural resources of the county from flood damage by integrating public safety with environmental protection.

Objective A: Ensure that the operation of flood control dams is coordinated with upstream and downstream land uses.

*Policy 1: Map Inundation Zones.* Continue to support the Headwaters Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD) and other public and private owners of flood control dams to accurately map all breach inundation zones and add them to the county tax maps. This should also apply to other dams that are subject to state dam safety regulations.

*Policy 2: Dam Improvements.* Support the Headwaters SWCD on needed dam safety improvements (necessitated by downstream development and subsequent changes to hazard classifications) in order to be in full compliance with Dam Safety standards and regulations.

*Policy 3: Outreach within Inundation Zones.* Work with Headwaters SWCD to develop outreach materials for residents within inundation zones, real estate agents, and other audiences that highlight the nature of the inundation zones and steps for emergency preparedness.

*Policy 4: Downstream Development.* Work with Headwaters SWCD to obtain easements for inundation zones downstream of publicly owned dams that are not already classified as High Hazard to prevent construction in those inundation zones that could require dam reclassification.

*Policy 5: Discourage Habitable Structures.* Once the breach inundation zones are mapped, consider applying zoning or other land use tools to recommend that habitable structures not be located within an inundation zone when reasonable alternatives exist to locate the same level of development outside of the zone.

*Policy 6: Upstream Development.* Map all flood control dam watersheds and keep abreast of upstream development to ensure that increases in flow associated with development do not compromise the integrity of the lakes or dams.

Objective B: Promote natural flood control strategies that protect public safety and help restore streams and riparian areas.

*Policy 1: Establish Policy.* Establish policies in the Stormwater, Zoning, and Subdivision regulations that provide incentives for naturalized and revegetated floodplains, riparian buffers, and stream restoration based on natural channel design concepts.

*Policy 2: Work with Partner Agencies.* Work with the Virginia Department of Forestry, Department of Conservation & Recreation, Headwaters SWCD, Natural Resources Conservation Service, the Virginia Department of Transportation, and other agencies to fund and install appropriate stream and riparian buffer restoration projects.

*Policy 3: Coordinate with Adjacent Localities.* Consider regional coordination of flood district provisions with the cities of Waynesboro and Staunton.

Objective C: Consider participating in FEMA sponsored programs.

*Policy 1: Community Rating System.* Explore voluntary participation in the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Community Rating System (CRS) Program. The CRS program is a voluntary incentive program that recognizes and encourages community floodplain management activities that exceed the minimum NFIP requirements. As a result, flood insurance premium rates are discounted to reflect the reduced flood risk resulting from the community actions meeting the three goals of the CRS: Reduce flood damage to insurable property; Strengthen and support the insurance aspects of the NFIP, and Encourage a comprehensive approach to floodplain management.

*Policy 2: Cooperating Technical Partners.* Continue to participate in the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Cooperating Technical Partners (CTP) Program. Through the CTP program, localities can provide detailed technical information to FEMA for use in establishing or revising special flood hazard areas.

## ***L. Parks and Recreation***

**Goal 1:** Establish and maintain parks and recreational facilities that are efficient, effective, and readily available to all county residents in accord with state service standards.

Objective A: Develop new parks and recreational facilities that can efficiently and effectively provide readily available services to all county residents.

*Policy 1: Land Acquisition.* Research and develop a land acquisition policy that establishes criteria for evaluating acquisition opportunities and strategies for acquiring critical parcels of public space that support the parks and recreation mission of the county. Acquire adequate land meeting the policy on which parks and recreation facilities can be established.

*Policy 2: Location of Facilities.* The county should undertake the acquisition, planning, and development of parks and recreational facilities at various levels throughout the county to provide services in an efficient and effective manner to all residents.

**A: Central Recreational Facility.** The county should develop one central recreational facility to provide facilities and programs on a countywide basis.

**B: Major Recreational Facilities.** The county should develop new major park facilities to serve the population centers in the county and should continue efforts to expand the Stuarts Draft Park. These facilities will vary depending on the needs of the areas they serve, but each would offer an array of programs and services.

**C: Community Recreational Facilities.** The county should develop, and expand as necessary, a series of community recreational facilities in individual communities throughout the county as opportunities and needs arise.

**D: Connections and Trails.** The county should develop or identify “linear” facilities, which provide their own recreational opportunities and may provide connections between other recreational facilities and resources.

**Objective B:** Research and pursue all available methods for funding park development that create a positive cash flow to offset expenditures, including private sector partnerships, establishment of a park foundation, citizen volunteers, grants, and revenue producing facilities.

*Policy 1: Business Plan.* Consider the development of a business plan for Parks and Recreation to support financial goals for the future.

*Policy 2: Regional, State, and Federal Assistance.* Coordinate with, and seek the assistance of, regional, state, and federal recreation and natural resource agencies in planning, funding, and providing parks and recreational facilities and services.

*Policy 3: Matching Grants.* As funding becomes available, reinstitute the Recreation Matching Grant Program to support community recreational facilities.

*Policy 4: Maintenance.* Emphasize the maintenance of existing facilities as a way to make efficient use of limited financial and physical resources.

*Policy 5: Sponsorships.* Develop a sponsorship policy to support special events, programs, and facilities.

*Policy 6: Sports Tourism.* Explore the feasibility of establishing a sports tourism initiative through the development and enhancement of public and private recreation-related facilities that attract visitors, serve citizens, and support local businesses.

Objective C: Proactively plan for the future parks and recreational needs of Augusta County. Coordinate the parks and recreation planning process with various public and private entities in the county, as well as with the Community Development Department.

*Policy 1: Coordinate Planning Efforts.* Planning for parks, open space conservation, scenic and historic preservation and land development should all be coordinated and integrated into a unified effort on the part of each agency and jurisdiction involved, including private sector and local community initiatives. In providing assistance to community organizations, the county should coordinate such efforts and funding so that they are consistent with a countywide approach to providing parks and recreational services so as to achieve maximum efficiency of money spent, as well as an appropriate balance in the location of facilities and services.

*Policy 2: Parks and Recreation Master Plan.* The county should continue to update the Parks and Recreation Master Plan. The planning process should include encouraging public participation by traditionally under-represented groups and should include targeted outreach to the county's youth, older residents, and those with mobility challenges.

*Policy 3: Greenways Planning.* The county should prepare a Greenways Plan incorporating its existing trails and major parks and recreational areas. The Greenways Plan should incorporate bikeway design standards including suggested cross sections and surface materials, signage, support facilities (such as bike racks, benches, trash receptacles, etc.) and road crossing safety measures. Align the Greenways Plan with existing and planned sidewalks and bikeways and integrate the plan with greenway plans of adjacent localities and interested organizations.

*Policy 4: City/County Cooperation.* Formalize agreements for new facilities and programs and enhance communication with the cities of Staunton and Waynesboro. Explore the possibility of developing a regional recreation plan and a regional program and facility assessment matrix to evaluate where duplication and/or gaps exist.

*Policy 5: Public/Private Cooperation.* Encourage cooperative efforts between the county, the cities, and private sector businesses and organizations to develop public parks and recreational facilities for the benefit of citizens at large, and to use private facilities in a cooperative and complementary manner.

*Policy 6: Shared Facilities.* The county should continue to maximize the partnerships with the County Schools in order to minimize duplication of resources and expand the opportunities to enhance community use of school assets when they are not being used for their primary mission of education.

Due to the different missions of the two entities, however, the county should continue the development of its own system of parks and recreational facilities, supplemented by, and coordinated with, school facilities. The county should consider the feasibility of developing parks and fields in conjunction with new school development whenever possible and continue to collaborate with county schools during the site design process.

**Objective D:** Better utilize the historical and natural resources of Augusta County to provide for the recreational needs of county citizens.

*Policy 1: Relating Park Facilities to Historic and Natural Resources.* The county should explore, through the greenways plan, the potential for building new park facilities in locations that would allow them to relate to historic locations and buildings or natural resources like rivers or ridgelines.

**Goal 2:** Provide a range of recreational programs and activities that are affordable, accessible, appropriate, and adequate in number, size, type, and location to accommodate the needs of all county residents and that promote personal growth, social development, and healthy lifestyles.

**Objective A:** Incorporate the particular needs of the county's diverse population, including but not limited to teens, at-risk youth, seniors, and persons with disabilities when planning for recreational facilities, programs, and greenways.

*Policy 1: Programming.* Re-evaluate the types of programs offered based on changing county demographics and citizen needs. Work to expand the recreational opportunities available to persons with disabilities, including physical, intellectual, and behavioral disabilities.

*Policy 2: Assessments.* Conduct assessments with persons with disabilities to ensure accessibility for participation in recreation programs. Continue to develop and use program performance measures to incorporate consistent standards in program design.

**Objective B:** Address issues of affordability and accessibility in planning recreation programs.

*Policy 1: Accessibility.* Work with the Staunton-Augusta-Waynesboro MPO and service providers to improve the public transportation service to county parks and facilities. Plan for multiple points of access for vehicles, pedestrians, and bicyclists to improve connectivity between parks and recreation facilities and surrounding neighborhoods.

*Policy 2: Affordability.* Conduct a comparative market analysis to review fees annually, to ensure that programs are offered at fair market value.

Objective C: Foster cooperative contributions of volunteer assistance for parks and recreational programs, including support from civic groups and organizations. The county should seek to coordinate such assistance and explore incentives to encourage continued and coordinated volunteer support especially in the area of youth sports programming. Continue to support private sector, non-profit, or other entities attempting to create or expand recreational opportunities in the county.

Objective D: Support programs that promote healthy lifestyles, such as fitness, aerobics, and wellness education, and that emphasize conservation and environmental awareness.

*Policy 1: Partnerships.* Enhance the partnerships with the schools and other community agencies to offer joint programming for health and wellness. Continue to establish partnerships with other community agencies to offer environmental programming.

*Policy 2: Community Pathways.* Explore the creation of community-wide pathways, greenways, and linear parks that link residential areas to parks, schools, and recreational facilities in a safe and efficient manner.

Objective E: Continue to promote awareness of the recreational opportunities available to county residents and visitors.

*Policy 1: Information Dissemination.* Continue to disseminate brochures and use the website and social media to inform county residents and visitors about county parks and recreational opportunities. Provide information at community events regarding parks and recreation programs and services.

*Policy 2: Promotion.* Explore new promotional strategies and efforts to increase awareness of programs and services and implement those which are most cost-effective.

## ***M. Public Safety (Including Law Enforcement and Fire & Rescue)***

**Goal 1:** Ensure that adequate public safety services are provided countywide in an efficient, effective, and economical manner.

Objective A: Maintain and support the continuation, development, and enhancement of the fire and rescue services.

*Policy 1: Fire and Rescue Master Plan.* The county should regularly update the Fire and Rescue Master Plan. The Plan should include strategies for staff (career and volunteers), infrastructure, equipment, and funding. Once

adopted, the county should develop an Implementation Plan for the recommendations in the Plan.

*Policy 2: Volunteers.* Continue to actively encourage the volunteer component of the combination volunteer/career fire and rescue system. Continue to develop incentives for recruiting, training, and retaining volunteers. Explore methods to maximize the efficiency and capability of the volunteer system.

*Policy 3: Training Programs.* Consider the development of a formalized Officer Candidate School to prepare career and volunteer staff for officer positions. Support the development of a Firefighter/Emergency Medical Technician training program at Valley Career and Technical Center and Blue Ridge Community College.

*Policy 4 Training Facilities.* The county should continue to develop a regional fire and rescue training facility. The facilities would augment the existing classroom and burn buildings already in use at the Government Center.

*Policy 5: Fire and Rescue Stations.* The Fire and Rescue Master Plan should identify infrastructure needs including station upgrades and future station locations.

*Policy 6: Private Sector Support.* Foster the support of the private sector in maintaining and improving fire and rescue protection services and facilities, including businesses and industries as well as local citizens and civic groups. Consider specific incentive programs for local businesses and industries to encourage the participation of employees in public safety volunteer efforts.

*Policy 7: Financial Assistance.* Pursue additional funding opportunities through the private sector, as well as from state and federal funding sources.

Objective B: Maintain and support the continuation, development, and enhancement of law enforcement and detention services.

*Policy 1: Innovative Law Enforcement Efforts.* Encourage the continuation and enhancement of innovative law enforcement efforts such as Neighborhood Watch and Business Watch programs.

*Policy 2: Accreditation.* Support the efforts of the Sheriff's Department to maintain accreditation from the Virginia Law Enforcement Professional Standards Commission.



*Policy 3: Innovative Detention Efforts.* The county should continue to work with Staunton and Waynesboro to implement innovative programs such as electronic incarceration which may help reduce detention capacity needs.

Objective C: Develop and improve the emergency communications and geographic information systems in order to provide the most effective and cost-efficient emergency services. Ensure that public safety employees are able to effectively communicate with each other to provide optimal public safety in Augusta County, Staunton, and Waynesboro.

*Policy 1: Communication Sites.* The county should continue to explore opportunities to enhance radio communication coverage in rural areas such as Middlebrook and Deerfield working with private sector providers wherever possible to reduce the public costs, while still providing the necessary level of emergency communications.

Objective D: Work with the cities of Staunton and Waynesboro and the other adjacent localities to provide efficient, effective, and economical public safety service.

*Policy 1: Shared Services/Mutual Aid Agreements.* The county should continue the use of shared services and mutual aid agreements with neighboring localities and entities where it is mutually beneficial and enhances service delivery.

*Policy 2: Coordinated Emergency Services Programs.* The county should continue to maintain backup Emergency Operations Center coverage with the City of Staunton. The county should explore further options for coordinating the delivery of emergency services with the cities.

**Goal 2:** Establish a land use and development pattern that facilitates the efficient provision of public safety services.

Objective A: Encourage a compact and efficient development pattern that permits the most cost effective provision of public safety services. Encourage developers to work with public safety agencies to provide any land or improvements necessary to ensure the efficient provision of public safety services.

Objective B: Ensure that sufficient fire flow is available throughout the county's public water system, or there are adequate alternative means of fire suppression if sufficient fire flow is not available, to permit public safety agencies to respond efficiently to fires.

*Policy 1: Water System Modeling and Improvements.* The county should continue to work with the Augusta County Service Authority in its efforts

to model their public water systems and to examine the steps that will be necessary to provide sufficient fire flow in all areas served by public water.

*Policy 2: Funding Improvements.* The county should continue its efforts to fund fire flow upgrades, leveraging private and other public dollars, where possible. The county should consider incorporating fire flow upgrades into the county's Capital Improvement Plan.

*Policy 3: Tanker Strike Team.* The county should continue to support the efforts of the Tanker Strike Team to enhance fire protection in areas where sufficient fire flow is not available.

Objective C: Explore all possibilities for providing adequate fire and rescue service to the rural and agricultural areas.

*Policy 1: Fire Suppression Infrastructure.* The county should explore the possibilities for providing the infrastructure necessary to provide fire and rescue service to the rural and agricultural areas. Further utilization of systems such as dry hydrants should be explored for placement in key locations countywide.

*Policy 2: Wildfire Protection Plan.* Consider the feasibility of implementing the recommendations of the Community Wildfire Protection Plan.

*Policy 3: Tanker Strike Team.* The county should continue to support the efforts of the Tanker Strike Team to enhance fire protection in rural areas.

**Goal 3:** Encourage the promotion of public awareness and understanding of public safety issues, needs, and activities.

## ***N. Transportation***

**Goal 1:** Maintain and enhance a safe and efficient roadway network that supports the intended land uses and development patterns planned for Urban Service and Community Development Areas; that provides accessibility within communities and mobility between communities and around the region; and that supports economic development.

Objective A: Apply access management standards to maintain the capacity on primary and secondary system roadways designated for non-residential uses.

*Policy 1: Consolidated Access.* Encourage the consolidation of driveways or provision of alternate local access to meet the driveway spacing standards and minimize driveway connections to arterial or collector streets. Access should be provided from the local street grid where possible. Direct access

to arterial or collector streets should be shared to serve multiple parcels with cross-access between parcels.

*Policy 2: Restricted Access.* Encourage the use of raised medians on arterials to restrict turning movements. The spacing between median openings should conform to the standards specified in the *VDOT Road Design Manual*.

Objective B: Apply operational and spot improvements to existing roadways to increase the capacity or safety where a need is identified through corridor studies, traffic impact studies, or safety studies.

*Policy 1: Improve Intersection Operations.* Where the overall intersection or any movement of a signalized or unsignalized intersection operates at a LOS D or worse, potential mitigation strategies include signalization, re-timing signals, signal synchronization, lane re-striping, or construction of a roundabout.

*Policy 2: Spot Improvements.* Where roadway segments create a bottleneck or a safety concern, spot improvements, including the addition of turn lanes or improving roadway geometry, will be considered.

*Policy 3: Widen existing roads.* Where roadway segments are operating at a LOS D or worse and all other strategies have been considered, adding lanes to existing roadways may be acceptable. Four-lane roads should be divided with a raised median and designed with left turn lanes to maximize the capacity of the facility. Four-lane roads through existing or developing communities should be designed to match the context of the community and promote walkability.

Objective C: Develop communities with grid street networks to promote community development and to provide alternative routes, reduce vehicle trip lengths, and to promote walkability.

*Policy 1: Small Area Plans.* Within Urban Service Areas and Community Development Areas, develop small area plans that analyze the conditions within the small area and recommend a cohesive plan for the development of the small area. Recommendations should include the layout of the transportation network, the appropriate arrangement of land uses, and the inclusion of schools, parks, and other civic uses.

*Policy 2: Grid Street Spacing.* Encourage the development of a grid of collector and local streets and parallel connectors to serve trips between and within communities and provide a walkable scale of development. The grid concept should take into consideration existing site conditions such as topography and environmental constraints and the layout should be

modified accordingly. Collectors should be spaced at one-half to one mile apart and local streets at a spacing of 300-600'.

*Policy 3: Interconnected Subdivisions.* Subdivisions should be designed into a grid of streets with interconnections to adjacent subdivisions and commercial development. Isolated subdivisions that do not connect to surrounding development are strongly discouraged.

*Policy 4: Walkable Communities.* Encourage the development of compact, mixed-use, pedestrian-oriented communities with housing located in close proximity to jobs, shopping, schools, and services.

Objective D: Coordinate with communities and VDOT to ensure that roadway projects are designed to meet the context of the community.

*Policy 1: Traffic Calming.* In existing or developing communities, discourage lane widths greater than 11'. Calm vehicle traffic within communities and near schools with pedestrian-oriented streetside design. Encourage buildings to be located at minimum setbacks near the street right-of-way, locate parking behind buildings, allow on-street parallel parking, and provide streetscaping amenities such as street trees, benches, and lighting between streets and sidewalks. Where streets are expected to be widened in the future, the setback should account for the anticipated maximum expansion of the roadway.

*Policy 2: Intersections.* Encourage the use of shorter street corner radii at the intersections of collector streets with other collector streets, local streets, or driveways and at the intersections of local streets with other local streets or driveways to promote safety. Collector street corner radii as small as 25' and local street corner radii as small as 15' are encouraged where staff and VDOT agree that a smaller radius is acceptable. Discourage channelized turning movements in existing or developing communities. Any new roads should be aligned to intersect at a 90-degree angle with existing roads and aligned directly towards the opposite leg of the intersection.

*Policy 3: Alternate Design Standards.* Promote the use of innovative design standards such as the ITE *Context Sensitive Solutions in Designing Major Urban Thoroughfares* in coordination with VDOT.

Objective E: Promote transit and non-motorized transportation use between and within communities.

*Policy 1: Pedestrian Facilities.* Sidewalks should be located on both sides of any new or reconstructed streets. Sidewalks should be a minimum of five feet in width. Sidewalks should be set back from arterial streets by 10 feet and from collector and local streets by six feet. Street trees and

pedestrian-scaled lighting are encouraged to be located between the street and the sidewalk to help buffer pedestrians from vehicle traffic.

*Policy 2: Cycling Facilities.* Bicycle lanes, shared-use paths, or wide shoulders should be considered on both sides of any new or reconstructed arterial or collector street, as well as on any streets identified in the Central Shenandoah Bicycle Plan. Bicycle lanes should be a minimum of four feet in width as measured from the edge of pavement, or five feet in width as measured from the edge of the parking lane where on-street parallel parking is present. Shared use paths should be a minimum of 10 feet in width. When these widths cannot be met, increasing the shoulder width to the extent possible should be considered.

*Policy 3: Promote Safe Routes to Schools.* Emphasize the construction of pedestrian and cycling facilities within a 2-mile radius of elementary and middle schools. Pursue grants from the Transportation Alternatives Program for Safe Routes to School projects to construct pedestrian and cycling infrastructure to improve safety near elementary and middle schools.

*Policy 4: Public Transit.* Coordinate with the CSPDC to expand public transit services in the county. This should include increased fixed-route transit connecting the Urban Service and Community Development Areas with Staunton and Waynesboro and additional on-demand transit services in the more rural areas.

*Policy 5: Ride Sharing.* The county, in coordination with the CSPDC, VDOT, and neighboring localities should encourage ridesharing alternatives such as carpooling, vanpooling and park and ride lots put forth by private sector or community groups and should help coordinate such initiatives.

*Policy 6: Multi-modal facilities.* Encourage the addition of multi-modal accommodations on County arterials and collectors, where appropriate, including bike and pedestrian facilities and transit stops.

**Objective F: Interstate Interchange Protection.** Protect the traffic capacity and economic development potential within a one mile radius of I-81 and I-64 interchanges through coordinated land use and transportation strategies.

*Policy 1: Interchange Area Plans.* Develop interchange area plans that provide specific recommendations for improving existing interchange access conditions and guidelines for future development or redevelopment of transportation facilities and land uses surrounding the interchange.

*Policy 2: Land Development.* Encourage the development of major regional traffic generators near the interchanges as these locations are best suited to carry regional traffic while minimizing traffic impacts on local streets and communities. Discourage low-intensity uses such as single-family housing within interchange areas.

Objective G: Coordinate with private land developers to ensure that the county's transportation and land use policies are implemented and to assess the impacts of proposed development.

*Policy 1: Traffic Impact Studies.* Traffic impact studies are required by VDOT for rezoning proposals that will substantially affect state-controlled highways and must comply with the adopted Traffic Impact Analysis Regulations, 24 VAC 30-155. The methodology for traffic impact studies will be coordinated with VDOT and the results will be reviewed by VDOT and county staff. The traffic impact study must include a transportation network plan that indicates the location of road, pedestrian, and bicycle facilities.

*Policy 2: Limit Development of New Private Roads.* New roads in the county will generally be public, state-maintained roads. Private roads may be allowed where they are designed to County standards and the long-term private maintenance of the streets is assured at no cost to the taxpayers.

*Policy 3: Right-of-Way Acquisition.* Developers shall provide the right-of-way for, and design and construct, as appropriate, proposed new roadways or roadway widenings indicated in the Comprehensive Plan.

**Goal 2:** Maintain and enhance the safety and efficiency of a rural road system in the Rural Conservation and Agricultural Conservation Areas that also preserves the county's rural character.

Objective A: Maintain and enhance the existing road network.

*Policy 1: Access Management.* Discourage direct access to roads functionally classified as collectors or above from individual lots. Encourage consolidated access points to serve new rural development. Protect the capacity and safety of existing rural roadways through the use of reverse frontage lots, shared access, and cross-access connections.

*Policy 2: Prioritize Unpaved Road Improvements.* Prioritize paving needs based on roadway volume, projected development on the roadway, safety concerns, connectivity to adjacent roads, and adjacent landowner desire for paving.

*Policy 3: Rural Rustic Road Program.* Submit annual recommendations to VDOT for unpaved road improvements that qualify for the Rural Rustic Road Program. These roads must meet secondary road standards.

*Policy 4: New Rural Roads.* Encourage public, state-maintained roads be provided to serve land that is rezoned for rural residential development. Where private roads are permitted, ensure that the roads are constructed to county standards and permanently maintained at no cost to the County. Permit private access easements only for minor subdivision lots.

*Policy 5: Maintenance of unpaved roads.* The county's 275 miles of unpaved road network are important for circulation, rural connectivity, and the agricultural economy, and should be maintained even if they remain unpaved.

**Objective B:** Apply operational and spot improvements to existing roadways to increase the capacity or safety where a need is identified through corridor studies, traffic impact studies, or safety studies.

*Policy 1: Identify Capacity or Safety Concerns* where potential spot improvements may solve the issue. Assess the need for operational and spot improvements through corridor studies, traffic impact studies, and safety studies to identify the feasibility of spot improvements, including the addition of turn lanes or improving roadway geometry to correct the deficiency.

*Policy 2: Improve Intersection Operations.* Where the overall intersection or any movement of a signalized or unsignalized intersection operates at a LOS D or worse, potential mitigation strategies include signalization, re-timing signals, signal synchronization, lane re-striping, or construction of a roundabout.

*Policy 3: Widen Existing Roads.* Where roadway segments are operating at a LOS D or worse and all other strategies have been considered, adding lanes to existing roadways may be acceptable.

**Goal 3:** Implement the county's Transportation Chapter.

**Objective A:** Use the Transportation Chapter to guide future transportation decisions. The Transportation Chapter provides recommendations that address strategies to mitigate projected congested roadway conditions in 2035.

*Policy 1: Local Road Networks.* Develop small area plans for Urban Service and Community Development Areas to provide further detail for the layout of local road networks.

*Policy 2: Road Upgrades.* Upgrade sections of substandard rural roads where the road is identified as a component of the future collector road network.

*Policy 3: New Road Construction.* Develop grid road networks and parallel road corridors in Urban Service and Community Development Areas.

*Policy 4: Access, Operational, and Spot Improvements.* Increase the capacity of existing roads to maintain or increase the capacity of the roadway through small-scale improvements such as access management, operational improvements, and other spot improvements.

*Policy 5: Incident Management.* Coordinate with VDOT and local and state emergency services providers on plans to relieve congestion on parallel roadways that result from incidents on I-81 and I-64.

*Policy 6: I-81 Improvements.* Coordinate with regional and state agencies to ensure that –I-81 Improvements are integrated into development plans for Augusta County. Ensure that plans for I-81 improvements include mitigation strategies to relieve congestion on parallel roadways resulting from I-81 construction.

**Goal 4:** Support the development of air, rail, transit, and bicycle facilities for transportation and economic development.

Objective A: Increase countywide opportunities for non-automobile options such as rail, air, bus, pedestrian, and bicycle transportation.

*Policy 1: Airports.* Encourage the viability and further development of Shenandoah Valley Regional Airport, including coordinating adjacent land uses and transportation improvements to best facilitate the full use of the airport. The county will encourage the expansion of operations at the airport for commercial and private air traffic. Encourage the continued use and expansion of Waynesboro’s Eagle’s Nest Airport to absorb a portion of the regional demand for private air travel.

*Policy 2: Rail Facilities.* Encourage the continued and further use of rail facilities for business, industrial and passenger service, including tourism functions. Encourage the coordination of adjacent land uses to best facilitate the maximum use of the railroads.

*Policy 3: Intermodal Transfer and Transloading Facilities.* Assess the need for an intermodal transfer facility to complement current freight movement by truck, rail, and air and support and encourage the expansion of transloading facilities.



*Policy 4: Trail Facilities.* Promote the development of a countywide interconnected system of shared-use paths and trail facilities for transportation, recreation, and tourism, connecting to neighboring cities and counties. Support the recommendations of the Central Shenandoah Valley Greenway Plan.

*Policy 5: Bicycle Facilities.* Promote the development of a countywide interconnected system of bicycle lanes for transportation, recreation, and tourism. Support the recommendations of the Central Shenandoah Valley Bicycle Plan. Encourage the development of bicycle facilities on arterial and collector streets within Urban Service and Community Development Areas, as appropriate.

*Policy 6: Pedestrian Facilities.* Promote the development of sidewalks and other pedestrian facilities on all streets within Urban Service and Community Development areas.

**Goal 5:** Support a coordinated, cooperative, and comprehensive transportation planning process.

Objective A: Support effective implementation through coordination, communication, and participation at local, regional, state and federal levels.

*Policy 1:* Support the Staunton Augusta Waynesboro Metropolitan Planning Organization (SAWMPO). Continue working through the SAWMPO to implement a regional approach to transportation planning and development.

*Policy 2:* Additions to SAWMPO. Encourage the addition of the Weyers Cave Urban Service Area to the SAWMPO so that all the County's major Urban Service Areas are included in the MPO boundaries and can benefit from the planning process.

*Policy 3: Coordination.* Improve communications and joint planning between residents, landowners, the county, the cities of Staunton and Waynesboro, VDOT and the PDC, including conducting special technical studies of major proposed developments within urbanizing areas when necessary. The VDOT Six Year Plan, functional classifications and matching fund allocations, together with the county's Comprehensive Plan, CIP, local road network plans and developer proffers, will provide the framework for coordinated road planning and construction. Design standards should be revised through coordination with VDOT to ensure implementation of the best and most current practices.

*Policy 4: Public Participation.* Keep the public informed of transportation needs and planned short and long-term improvements. Involve the public

in the development of transportation plans and the design of transportation projects.

*Policy 5. School System Coordination.* Coordinate with the county school system to ensure safe access to schools and to integrate school development plans into transportation planning efforts. Promote use of the Transportation Alternatives Program-Safe Routes to School Program for infrastructure and education funding.

Objective B: Increase, mobilize or leverage the necessary funding for transportation planning and for proposed transportation improvements.

*Policy 1: Pursue Transportation Funding Sources.* The county will pursue a range of funding sources to support local transportation projects including funds through federal and state options and public/private partnerships.

*Policy 2: Revise Countywide Budget Allocations.* The county should revise its current transportation funding allocation system to ensure that each magisterial district receives an appropriate portion of funding relative to the costs for constructing and maintaining the transportation facilities needed to support the projected growth within each district. Magisterial districts containing Urban Service and Community Development Areas will receive a significantly higher proportion of future growth than those containing Rural Conservation and Agricultural Conservation Areas, necessitating a far more extensive transportation network. Additionally, urban roads are more expensive to construct than rural roads, they carry a higher volume of traffic, and they also typically include the provision of pedestrian and bicycling facilities. It is also important to maintain rural roads. Budget allocations should also provide for adequate road maintenance in the Rural and Agricultural Conservation Areas.

*Policy 3: Prioritize Safety Improvements.* The highest priority for transportation funding in the county should be to address safety concerns.

*Policy 4: Maintain and Enhance Existing Transportation Infrastructure.* To determine the appropriate strategy for addressing roadway congestion, first consider improving existing roadways through access management strategies, operational improvements, and spot improvements. Consider developing parallel roads or road networks to relieve traffic from congested roadways as a second option. Road widening may be considered as a third option in the event that the first two strategies are not projected to relieve the roadway congestion to an acceptable level.

## ***O. Utilities***

**Goal 1:** Ensure that all county residents have access to a safe and adequate water supply and that private water and wastewater systems do not pose long-term public health or environmental threats to the county and its residents.

Objective A: The County should ensure that individual water and wastewater treatment systems do not pose long-term public health or environmental threats to the county and its residents.

*Policy 1: Mandatory Maintenance.* The county should coordinate with the Health Department to develop a strategy for the mandatory maintenance of all private sewage disposal systems.

*Policy 2: Mandatory Pump-Out of Septic Systems.* The county should consider a mandatory septic pump-out program adapted from the requirements of the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act and Regulations.

Objective B: Develop public water supply sources to meet current and future county demands for a safe source of drinking water.

*Policy 1: Source Water Protection.* The county should continue to work with the Augusta County Service Authority to adopt new Sourcewater Protection Overlay districts as new public water supplies are actively developed and the hydrogeological studies defining the groundwater recharge areas for existing and future public water supplies are completed.

*Policy 2: Exploration for Additional Sources.* The Service Authority should continue its efforts to identify new sources that can be developed to meet the anticipated demands for public water.

**Goal 2:** Ensure that public sewer and water facilities are provided in an efficient and cost-effective manner in terms of the size, location, design, and pattern of the systems.

Objective A: Coordinate the provision of public water and sewer with the location of development.

*Policy 1: Urban Service Areas.* It is recognized that not all Urban Service Areas currently have public water and sewer services to them, however the plan supports having both services to these areas within the 20 year timeframe of the plan. Development occurring in these areas are expected to utilize public water and sewer and should develop at densities commensurate with those recommended in the Plan.

Designated Urban Service Areas are the first priority locations for the provision and expansion of public water and sewer facilities.

*Policy 2: Community Development Areas.* It is recognized that not all Community Development Areas currently have public water services to them, however the plan supports having public water to these areas within the 20 year timeframe of the plan. Development occurring in these areas are expected to utilize public water and should develop at densities commensurate with those recommended in the Plan. Designated Community Development Areas are generally the second priority locations for the provision and expansion of public water service.

*Policy 3: Funding Infrastructure Improvements.* The county should consider making strategic investments in infrastructure, such as sewer trunk lines and water tanks, to facilitate growth in key areas where there is a reasonable expectation for a return on the investment. The county may provide direct financial assistance for infrastructure projects in combination with other sources such as state and federal grants or loans, the establishment of service districts, privilege fees, or other similar mechanisms aimed at keeping the fiscal impacts on the Augusta County Service Authority rate payers, as well as the county citizens at large, to a minimum.

*Policy 4: Utilization of small systems.* Where water and sewer systems are limited in size, provisions should be made to encourage development to occur at the densities provided for with existing plant or source capacities and allowing remaining portions of the development area to occur on individual water and/or sewer systems once the public service capacities are reached.

*Policy 5: Rural Areas.* Public water and sewer facilities will not be provided or extended to the designated Rural Conservation or Agricultural Conservation Areas during the timeframe of this Plan, except when necessary to mitigate an imminent and severe public health hazard.

*Policy 6: Design and Sizing.* Public water and sewer facilities should be designed and sized to serve full development of the entire planning area and/or subarea. The county should continue to work with the ACSA and private developers on funding mechanisms to achieve the increased capacity.

*Policy 7: Weyers Cave Wastewater Treatment Plants.* The county should work with the ACSA to upgrade and expand the Weyers Cave Wastewater Treatment Plant in accordance with current waste load allocations and anticipated future growth in the Weyers Cave area.

*Policy 8: Linkage and Coordination of Water and Sewer Systems.* When feasible and consistent with the other policies of this Plan, additional utility linkages may be made in order to gain similar efficiencies and back-up capabilities. Board approval will be required when a line extension will have to cross a Rural Conservation or Agricultural Conservation Area.

*Policy 9: Planning Commission Approval.* Extensions or installations of new public utilities will require Planning Commission approval, pursuant to State Code §15.2-2232. Section 15.2-2232 requires the Planning Commission to determine whether or not a proposed public facility is in conformance with the adopted Comprehensive Plan. The review process may include a public hearing and is required to be completed within a 60 day period.

*Policy 10: Ownership and Operation.* All new public water and sewer facilities in the county must be owned and operated by the Augusta County Service Authority or another municipality. Private community water and sewer systems shall not be allowed.

*Policy 11: Mandatory Connections.* In areas where new public water and/or sewer facilities are provided, connections of structures to the system(s) should, in a manner provided for in the State Code, be mandatory.

**Objective B:** Ensure that sufficient fire flow is available throughout the public water system to permit public safety agencies to respond sufficiently to fires.

*Policy 1: Water System Modeling and Improvements.* The county should continue to work with the Service Authority in its efforts to model their water systems and to examine the steps that will be necessary to provide sufficient fire flow in all areas served by public water.

**Goal 3:** Ensure that solid waste disposal services and facilities are provided in an efficient and cost-effective manner.

**Objective A:** Continue to update, with public involvement, the county's Solid Waste Management Plan in order to ensure that solid waste disposal service is provided in a manner that is environmentally safe, adequate in capacity, and economical to local residents for the long-term.

*Policy 1: Regional Landfill.* Continue current plans for developing and using the expanded regional landfill site to meet short and medium term local solid waste disposal needs. Review and update those plans on a periodic basis, particularly in regards to the efficient use and accessibility of the landfill site and its access roads.

*Policy 2: Solid Waste Collection Sites.* The county should continue to study the current system of solid waste collection sites in order to determine the appropriate number and location of these sites. When necessary, provide additional convenience sites or expand existing sites and services to handle increasing volumes in high-growth areas. Ensure all sites are adequately positioned and screened and do not adversely impact surrounding properties.

*Policy 3: Solid Waste Collection.* The county should study the feasibility of a solid waste collection system for residents located in the Urban Service and Community Development Areas.

*Policy 4: Recycling.* Continue to promote and expand local recycling efforts for residential, business, and industrial users and continue to exceed the state's mandatory recycling rate. Consider options for expanding the list of materials that can be recycled at county recycling centers.

*Policy 5: Household Hazardous Waste.* Promote educational efforts regarding the safe and proper disposal of household hazardous waste materials. Continue support for annual collection efforts.

**Goal 4:** Coordinate with non-public utility providers including telephone, gas and electric services in order to ensure adequate provision of services.

Objective A: Achieve such coordination through the ongoing processes for Comprehensive Planning, CIP and land development project reviews.

*Policy 1: Coordinated GIS Database System.* Develop a coordinated GIS database system for mapping all applicable utilities, both public and private, located within the county.

**Objective B:** Improve the telecommunications infrastructure in the county to enhance economic growth, public safety, and communications services countywide.

*Policy 1: Expand Broadband.* Implement the recommendations of the county's telecommunications consultant to expand the broadband communications infrastructure to serve underserved areas. Consider public/private partnerships where beneficial.

*Policy 2: Co-location.* Ensure co-location opportunities are fully evaluated before permitting new wireless communications towers and require new towers to provide space for county emergency communication systems.

## **IV. Planning Policy Area/Future Land Use Map**

## V. Implementation Strategy

One of the primary weaknesses of the previous planning efforts by Augusta County had been the lack of a concrete strategy for the implementation of the Plan. Therefore, a significant focus of the 2007 Comprehensive Plan was to identify specific tasks that needed to be completed. Most of the tasks were identified as a part of the Goals, Objectives, and Policies. The purpose of the Implementation Strategy is to link these tasks with a responsible party in order to ensure that they are considered in the implementation process by the appropriate personnel.

The Implementation Strategy outlines the tasks that need to be completed in order to enact the recommendations of the Goals, Objectives, and Policies, as well as the Planning Policy Area/Future Land Use Map. The tasks identified by the Implementation Strategy include recommendations for considering policy changes, ordinance changes, and further planning and technical study efforts for particular community resources or geographical areas.

The Implementation Strategy (**Table 5**) is divided into 14 sections by topic area. These topic areas correspond directly to the sections of the Goals, Objectives, and Policies. There is also an additional section for ordinance changes. Each task is linked directly to one or more objectives or policies and has one or more responsible parties.

Since the completion of the Plan in 2007, many of the items contained in the Implementation Strategy have been completed. The items in the Strategy, just like the Plan itself, are envisioned to be accomplished over a 20 year time period. Some of the items identified as “study” have been considered and the decision made not to pursue at that time.



<b>Table 7. Implementation Strategy</b>		
	<b>Task</b>	<b>Responsible</b>
<b>Ordinance Changes</b>		
n/a	Revise the zoning and subdivision ordinances in order to implement the recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan. Ordinance changes should be analyzed in terms of costs to developer, property owners, and County.	Consultant, Community Development, County Attorney
<b>Land Use</b>		
Land Use: 1.D.1 Trans: 1.C.1	Prepare small area plans for Weyers Cave and Stuarts Draft	Community Development
Land Use: 1.A.6 Trans: 1.F.1	Prepare interchange area overlay plans for Weyers Cave, Verona, Woodrow Wilson Parkway, Mint Spring, and Greenville	Community Development, VDOT
Land Use: 2.E.3	Study the need for ordinance changes to discourage new development from ridgelines (as part of the ordinance revisions)	Consultant, Community Development, County Attorney
Land Use: 2.B.4 Ag: 2.A.3	Study the effectiveness of the Zoning Ordinance in protecting all types of agricultural land uses; Evaluate the effectiveness of the changes to the General Agriculture district regulations and the elimination of the Exclusive Agriculture district.	Community Development, County Attorney, Ag Industry Board, Planning Commission, Board of Supervisors
Land Use: 2.A. Ag: 2.B	Monitor the amount of new residential development in the RCA and ACA	Community Development
<b>Agriculture</b>		
Land Use: 2.B.1 Ag: 1.B.1	Study the feasibility and effectiveness of incentives to encourage the creation and support of additional Ag/Forestral District	Ag Industry Board, County Attorney, Community Development
<b>Economy</b>		
Econ: 1.A.4	Periodically update the strategic plan for economic development	EDA, Economic Development
<b>Education</b>		
Educ: 1.A Educ: 1.B	Prepare a strategic plan for education	School Board
<b>General Government</b>		
Gen Gov: 1.A.2	Update Government Center Master Plan	County Administrator, BOS
Gen Gov: 2.A.1	Study the feasibility of establishing a system of special service districts for the funding of infrastructure improvements	Community Development, County Attorney, Service Authority
Gen Gov: 1.B Housing: 1.B.7 Parks: 1.C.4 Pub Safe: 1.D Hu Serv: 1.D	Develop a plan for coordinating public service provision with applicable neighboring localities and agencies	County
Gen Gov: 2.B	Develop a strategy for ensuring USA/CDA infrastructure improvements and RCA/ACA preservation programs are funded by all county residents	Community Development, County Administrator, Service Authority, Ag Development, BOS

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<b>Historic Resources</b>		
	<b>Task</b>	<b>Responsible</b>
Hist Res: 1.A.3	Consider developing a historic preservation plan	Community Development
Hist Res: 1.B.5	Consider applying for the Certified Local Government program	Community Development, BOS
Hist Res: 1.B.6	Study changes to county tax policies and incentives that would encourage historic preservation measures	Finance, BOS
Hist Res: 3.A.2	Study the feasibility of establishing a countywide heritage tourism program	Economic Development
<b>Housing</b>		
Housing: 1.B.1, 6, and 7	Prepare a regional housing plan to study the housing needs of the county and the feasibility of establishing local and regional housing programs	Community Development, Staunton, and Waynesboro
Housing: 1.B.8	Study the feasibility of adopting the Property Maintenance Code	Community Development, County Administrator
<b>Library</b>		
Library: 1.B.1	Develop a Strategic Plan for the Library	Library Board
<b>Natural Resources</b>		
Nat Res: 1.D.4	Develop a promotional program on the economic benefits provided by the county's natural resources	Community Development
Nat Res: 2.A	Develop watershed-based stormwater plans for the MS4 Region and the remaining USAs	Consultant, Community Development
Nat Res: 2.B.1	Seek to demonstrate LID techniques on new public and private projects as an outreach and learning tool	Community Development
Nat Res: 2.C.1	Modify ordinances in order to provide for cost-effective solutions to flood control and stormwater management	Consultant, Community Development, County Attorney
Nat Res: 3.A	Adopt performance standards that can be applied to projects subject to county review	Community Development
Nat Res: 3.B	Consider adopting performance standards into county ordinances	Community Development, BOS
Nat Res: 4.B.3	Consider providing incentives for agricultural and forestry BMPs	Agriculture Development, Community Development
Nat Res: 5.B.4	Consider developing standards for the safe provision of water and wastewater in cluster developments	Community Development, County Attorney, Service Authority
Nat Res: 6.A.	Support all public and private owners of flood control dams as they work to map, assess, and improve their facilities	Community Development
<b>Parks and Recreation</b>		
Parks: 1.C.2	Update Parks and Recreation Master Plan	Parks and Recreation
Parks: 1.A.2	Develop new parks and recreational facilities as recommended by the Parks and Recreation Master Plan	Parks and Recreation

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Parks: 1.B.2	Seek assistance from regional, state, and federal recreation and natural resource agencies in planning, funding, and providing parks and recreation facilities	Parks and Recreation
Parks: 1.C.3	Prepare a greenways plan to study the potential for connecting parks and recreational facilities to residential, historic, and natural resource locations	Parks and Recreation, Community Development, MPO
<b>Public Safety</b>		
Pub Safe: 1.A.1	Update the Fire and Rescue Master Plan and prepare an Implementation Plan for its recommendations	Fire and Rescue
Pub Safe: 1.A.4	Continue to develop regional fire and rescue training facilities	Fire and Rescue
Pub Safe: 1.A.2	Continue to develop incentives for encouraging participation in public safety volunteer efforts	Fire and Rescue
Pub Safe: 1.B	Maintain innovative law enforcement and detention efforts	Sheriff
Pub Safe: 2.B. Pub Safe: 2.C	Ensure sufficient fire flow and adequate alternative means of fire suppression countywide.	Fire and Rescue, Service Authority, County Administrator, BOS
<b>Transportation</b>		
Trans: 1.B.1	Identify operational and spot improvements, through corridor studies, for Route 11, Route 608, and additional congested corridors	MPO, Community Development, VDOT
Trans: 1.E.3 Educ: 1.A.6	Pursue Transportation Alternatives Program- Safe Routes to Schools grants to improve safety near elementary and middle schools	Community Development
Trans: 2.A.3 Trans: 2.A.4	Submit annual recommendations to VDOT for unpaved road improvements that qualify for Rural Rustic Road Program	Community Development, VDOT
Trans: 4.A.3	Assess the need for an intermodal transfer facility to complement current freight movement by truck, rail, and air	Community Development, VDOT
Trans: 5.A.2	Revise transportation budget allocations to concentrate resources in districts with the greatest development pressures	County Administrator, BOS
<b>Utilities</b>		
Utilities: 1.A.1 Nat Res: 5.B.2	Study the feasibility of ordinance changes requiring mandatory maintenance/pump out of private sewage systems	Health Department, Community Development, County Attorney
Utilities 2.A.7	Update and expand the Weyers Cave Wastewater Treatment Plant	Service Authority, Board of Supervisors
Utilities: 3.A	Update the Solid Waste Management Plan for the efficient provision of solid waste services	County Administrator, Service Authority
Utilities: 3.A.3	Study the feasibility of establishing a solid waste collection program for residents of the USA and CDA	County Administrator

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Utilities: 3.A.5	Develop an educational program regarding the proper disposal of household hazardous waste materials	County Administrator
Utilities: 4.A.1	Develop a coordinated GIS database for the mapping of all applicable utility system locations	County Administrator, Service Authority, GIS

## **VI. Annual Review**

### ***A. Annual Plan Review***

Recognizing the dynamic nature of growth pressures and development patterns, the county will formally review the Comprehensive Plan on an annual basis in order to monitor the progress, appropriateness, and effectiveness of its policies. In addition to the annual review and possible Plan amendments initiated by the county, the county will also entertain proposed Plan amendments from the private sector, also on an annual basis. (The Board of Supervisors may initiate amendments to the Plan at any time, in accord with State Code provisions for public notice, public hearing, and Planning Commission action.)

Plan amendment applications will be accepted during the course of each calendar year and reviewed and acted upon in conjunction with the county's annual Plan review process. An appropriate fee will be assessed to the applicant for a Plan amendment submission in order to cover the administrative costs of the county's review. Plan amendments are subject to the same public notification requirements set forth in the State Code for other Comprehensive Plan actions. In addition, plan amendments may be required to be submitted to VDOT for their review and comment, prior to action by the Board of Supervisors. The county will develop specific criteria for submission and evaluation of Plan amendment proposals in order to ensure an orderly and efficient process. Such Plan amendments are a discretionary process on the part of the county, not required by State Code.

Plan amendments may involve either general or specific elements of the Comprehensive Plan. However, in general, the Plan should only be amended in cases where the proposed change exceeds the inherent flexibility of the Plan, or in which the change serves to clarify a provision within the Plan. No Plan amendment should be accepted or approved which does not clearly support the overall goals of the Plan.

Examples of Plan amendments that may be proposed include:

- A major adjustment to the boundaries of a designated Policy Area
- A major change to the boundaries of the Future Land Use categories
- Changes to or clarifications of the Policy Area definitions
- Changes to specific policies for a resource (such as agriculture or housing)

Changes made to items such as the Implementation Strategy or the Capital Improvements Program need not be a part of the annual review process, as these are implementation items that are necessarily flexible.

## **VII. Capital Improvements Plan**

### ***A. Overview***

The county's policies for capital investments are interdependent with the policies for land use and growth management. The Comprehensive Plan sets the framework for linking capital improvements with land use decisions. A CIP offers a systematic approach to planning and financing capital improvements. Although capital improvement programming cannot totally eliminate inefficiencies and the element of chance, a well-prepared CIP can offer advantages such as:

- Anticipating future capital facility needs
- Correlating projects to community goals, financial capabilities and anticipated growth
- Eliminating duplication and poorly planned expenditures
- Encouraging cooperation with other governmental units
- Establishing work schedules and cost estimates
- Facilitating federal and state grants
- Facilitating private sector improvements consistent with the Comprehensive Plan
- Developing public support for capital expenditures

The following are general guidelines for the county's annual updates of its five-year Capital Improvements Program (CIP) and a preliminary forecast of long term costs for capital facilities, based upon the 20-year growth forecast and existing and/or expected levels of service.

The following policies provide a framework for linking the CIP with the Comprehensive Plan.

- The county will expect to fund its capital improvements from a variety of sources. To fund the capital budget, year-end fund balances and reassessment revenues are supplemented by designated revenues, i.e., one-third of consumer utility taxes, one-third of BPOL license taxes, 90% of meal taxes, a portion of lodging taxes, rental income, and the 1997 NADA tangible personal property adjustment. Additionally, with school projects, the goal is to position the county to receive the best possible financing package, i.e., VPSA, VPSA loan subsidy, literary loan, etc.
- The county will expect that during the 20-year planning horizon outlined in this Plan, capital expenditures will be allocated to the various geographic areas in the county generally in proportion to the rate of population growth in each of those areas. However, the county will attempt to balance the provision of facilities and services to meet existing needs and deficiencies with the provision of facilities and services to serve new development.

***B. Capital Facility Cost Forecasts***

**Overall Assumptions**

- The population of the county is projected to increase by 13,076 people between 2013 and 2030.
- Future Levels of Service are based on either state or national standards, or local demand estimates derived from current service levels.
- Capital needs included in the Plan are generally based on resources available and do not necessarily represent all of the projects that will be needed to accommodate county residents in the future.
- Capital needs will be refined by the strategic plans recommended in the Plan for education, stormwater management, parks and recreation and the planning efforts of the Service Authority.
- Cost figures are generally rounded to either the nearest half million or the nearest 100,000, depending upon the level of information available.
- All costs are shown at current dollar value, unless otherwise noted, and reflect only the actual cost of acquisition and/or construction, not operating/maintenance nor financing.

**Table 8  
 Summary of Total Capital Needs and Costs  
 2014-2034**

<b>Facility</b>	<b>2014-18 Cost</b>	<b>2019-2034 Cost</b>	<b>Total</b>
Courts	44.0m	-0-	44.0m
Detention	-0-	\$9.0m	\$9.0m
Economic Development	\$20.0m	\$60.0m	\$80.0m
Emergency Services	\$10.4m	\$28.5m	\$38.9m
Fireflow	\$2.7m	\$8.1m	\$10.8m
Government Administration	*	*	*
Libraries	\$2.5m	\$2.5m	\$5.0m
Parks and Recreation	\$3.0m	\$3.5m	\$6.5m
Schools	\$40.7m	\$50.0m	\$90.7m
Sinking Funds	\$23.2m	\$69.6m	\$92.8m
Solid Waste Management	\$3.7m	\$15.6m	\$19.3m
Stormwater Management	\$1.0m	\$25.0m	\$26.0m
Transportation	\$15.0m	\$60.0m	\$75.0m
Water and Sewer	\$29.3m	\$41.0m	\$70.3m
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$195.5m</b>	<b>\$372.8m</b>	<b>\$568.3m</b>

### ***C. Courts***

The County's original Government Center Master Plan was developed in 1988 with updates in 2001 and 2008. All three plans identified sites for the Augusta County Courts at the Government Center should the Board and Public (referendum required) desire to move the Courts from the traditional County Seat in Staunton.

The 2008 Master Plan indicated 100,000 square feet would be needed if the courts were relocated to the Government Center. Space needs assessments were conducted in 2002 (Courthouse Study Committee) and 2007 (Dewberry Report on General District and Juvenile and Domestic Relations Courts). In 2013, the National Center for State Courts conducted a "Workload Assessment Report" which indicated a need for the following number of judges in Augusta County:

Circuit Court:	1.3
General District:	0.8
Juvenile and Domestic:	1.3

The Board of Supervisors, in 2012, conducted a feasibility study for renovation and expansion of the 1901 Circuit Court building in Staunton. In addition, \$2.5 million has been spent over the past decade to renovate and maintain the General District and Juvenile Courts. The County and City are discussing a "cost sharing" agreement to proceed with improvements to the Circuit Court building (vs. proceeding with discussions to relocate the Courts Complex to the Government Center). The County commissioned a Needs Assessment/Concept Plan for relocating the Circuit, General District, and Juvenile and Domestic Relations Courts to the Government Center. The Study was completed in July 2015. In the event a cost sharing agreement with Staunton is not reached, it is the County's intent to proceed with a referendum for relocating the courts to the Government Center (November 3, 2015)

### ***D. Detention***

The county is a member of the Shenandoah Valley Juvenile Detention Home Commission (SVJDHC) and Middle River Regional Jail Authority (MRRJA).

#### **1. SVJDHC**

Current facility, occupied in 2003, cost \$10 million and has a rated capacity of 58 beds. Members include cities of Staunton, Harrisonburg, Lexington and Waynesboro, as well as Counties of Augusta, Rockbridge and Rockingham. Average Daily Population is 44 or 75.9% of capacity. Unused beds are rented to non-member jurisdictions, the federal government, and to the state. Housing pods consist of four 10-bed units, one 15-bed unit, and three special use beds. The Master Plan allows for two additional units. The 20-year expansion needs could include an additional 10-bed unit at a cost of \$2.1 million. This expansion would be dependent upon Court-directed pre and post dispositional admissions. On an interim basis, the SVJDHC is creating a three (3) bed female pod to provide for additional capacity at a cost of \$500,000. The County's admissions currently average 11.8% of the Center's total population. The County share of the \$2.1 million expansion based on current utilization would be \$247,800.



## **2. MRRJA**

Current facility, occupied in 2006, cost \$59 million and has a rated capacity of 402 beds (double bunking in cell blocks and triple bunking in dormitory work release areas have resulted in a revised capacity of 966). Members include the cities of Staunton and Waynesboro and the County of Augusta. Average Daily Population is 434 over the rated capacity, but less than 50% of the revised capacity of 966. Unused beds are available to be rented to non-member jurisdictions and to the state. In 2014, over 200 of the unused beds were being rented.

The Master Plan provides for phased expansions. Costs provided are 2014 estimates:

- Men's Blocks C & D    94-144 beds\*            \$ 3.7m by 2034
  - Women's Wing            144 beds                    \$ 7.3m by 2034
  - Men's Wing                647 beds                    \$23.3m by 2034
- 
- Depending on whether dormitory or hardened cells are constructed.

With Rockingham County and Harrisonburg joining the Regional Jail Authority, the county's admissions has dropped to 25.7% of the total population, resulting in a reduction/savings in future operating and capital debt costs.

## ***E. Economic Development***

The recruitment of new industries as employment centers and revenue generators is a priority for the county. In order to successfully recruit major industries to the county, available sites must have a heightened state of readiness and adequate public utilities. Readiness factors include the completion of environmental studies and geotechnical work on sites and could be accomplished for approximately \$20,000 per site. In addition, several key industrial/commercial centers in the county currently lack the infrastructure necessary to attract new businesses. Funding for expanded water and sewer services and additional site readiness activities for these areas is estimated to exceed \$80 million over the next 20 years. For projects of this magnitude, additional funding will be required and could be obtained from regional, state, and federal sources.

## ***F. Emergency Services***

Emergency Communications Center – There are three capital projects identified for the county's Emergency Communications Center (ECC). All three projects are anticipated to fall within the 20-year planning period.

- New Center – to accommodate future growth (personnel and technology) the current ECC could be located in the Fire Training Center and built as part of the Public Safety Building that would also include Fire & Rescue administrative offices and Fire/Rescue training classrooms. Estimated cost for equipment only is \$4.5 million (the building costs are included in the Fire Training Center estimate below).

- ECC Radio System Upgrade – The current system was installed in 1998 at a cost of \$2.3 million. The FCC has mandated that all radio stations will have to be converted to “narrowband” by 2015. The ECC will develop and improve the emergency communications and geographic information systems in order to provide the most effective and cost-efficient emergency services. To improve communications, the county is adding communication sites at Middlebrook and Deerfield to enhance the radio communication coverage due to narrow-banding. The current leases for the existing towers and microwave radio system will need to be reviewed as the microwave system is outdated and needs to be replaced. The estimated cost for this upgrade is \$4.4 million.
- Next Generation 9-1-1- The ability of citizens to reach 9-1-1 from any available and marketed communication device utilizing today’s capabilities of transmitting text, pictures, and video is currently non-existent. “NG9-1-1” supports an Internet Protocol (IP) based technology growth that enables communications devices to access 9-1-1 service. No costs have been determined to implement this technology at this time, but demand for this service is likely to come within the timeframe of this Plan.

Fire and Rescue – Efforts to update the Fire and Rescue Master Plan prepared in 2010 are ongoing. Capital improvement needs will be added to the plan as they are identified.

- Fire Training Center – Phase I of the Fire Training Center was completed in 2008. Phase II would include the development, planning, design, and construction of a classroom/office building. The offices would have Fire/Rescue Administration offices and 911 operations center. Estimated cost is \$6.0 million, with an additional \$4.5 million in ECC equipment discussed earlier.
- Fire Stations – The Master Plan anticipates the need for four new stations over the next twenty years. The estimates include one station in the first 5 years and three in the next fifteen years. The estimated cost per location: \$6 million for a total of \$24 million over the next 20 years.

### ***G. Fireflow Improvements***

The County has established fireflow requirements for all new development in the county. The requirements may be met through the public water system or through alternative water sources or alternate means for fire suppression. The Augusta County Service Authority has identified over \$10.6 million in public water system improvements that result in improved local fire protection capability, as well as improvements to their overall system. Augusta County Fire/Rescue recommends installing dry hydrants in strategic locations to aid in fire protection in rural areas. A total of \$200,000 has been budgeted over the 20 year timeframe of the plan to assist in the installation of dry hydrants.

### ***H. Government Administration***

The county’s current square footage in the main Government Center buildings total 117,592. This does not include the various outbuildings on the property, which currently house Maintenance, Cooperative Extension, Social Services, and OSHA. While the School Administration Offices were partially relocated to the Government Center in August of 2013,

services are not all located within the same building, and the bus garage and maintenance functions remained in Fishersville. During the planning period of this Plan, consideration should be given to master planning all of the administrative needs of the School System and developing a plan to meet them. Short term, staffing space needs will be met by other agencies relocating from current space in the Government Center to new facilities. Space has been earmarked for the Fire & Rescue Administrative offices and the ECC on the grounds of the Fire & Rescue Training Center. This will free up 3,042 square feet and 3,685 square feet respectively in the Government Center. Currently located in refurbished warehouse space, a consolidated Staunton-Augusta-Waynesboro Social Services Office will likely be needed sometime during the timespan covered by this Plan and could be located in the Fishersville area. While such a move will free up space in the warehouse building, it should be recognized that there are limits to the useful life of that space. The Shenandoah Valley Animal Services Center is currently located in Lyndhurst and is 2574 square feet. An expansion will be complete in 2015 adding 1800 square feet to the facility. The master plan for the Government Center analyzing existing and future needs for services should be updated in the short-term and recommendations for additions/expansions/new spaces will be added to the Capital Improvements Plan as they are identified in the study.

### ***I. Libraries***

The Library has concentrated on library station and branch development, as well as the renovation of the main facility in Fishersville over the last 5-10 years. They envision the need for two additional locations, one in the north-central area of the County and one in the south. In the coming years, they also anticipate the need to remain current with advances and changes in technology in order to provide convenient service delivery and to meet the expectations of its clients. However, predicting future technological needs is difficult as this field is in a constant state of flux. More specific capital improvement needs will be identified in the library's Master Plan and Technology Plan.

### ***J. Parks and Recreation***

The 2003 Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan provided a 20-year blueprint for Augusta County. Now over 10 years old, the plan is slated to be reviewed. Once that review is complete, revisions will be made to their capital improvements needs list. The list that follows includes currently identified needs and estimated costs for each. Successful implementation of many of the projects will be dependent upon continued community support for the operation of recreation programs (Ruritan Clubs and Athletic Associations) and their ability to leverage private sector funding for operating and capital projects. Likewise, the schools will continue to play an important role in recreation programming. As new construction or renovation of schools is considered, recreation space planning, i.e., multi-purpose and meeting rooms should be taken into consideration to accommodate both educational and community recreational functions since schools generally are community focal points, especially recognizing the expansive geography of the County.

There is a need to increase the quantity of recreational fields available for youth and adult soccer and to improve the quality of current playing surfaces. Within the first five years, there is a need for 4 more fields at a cost of \$200,000 per field and a need to install irrigation on 10 fields at

\$18,000 per field. The need for a recreation center has also been identified. This need could be met through significant renovations to an existing facility or building a new facility. The Plan uses the estimate for a new facility at \$2.0 million.

In years 6-20, recreation needs are expected to continue and to increase. The Plan estimates the need to build another major park facility (estimated cost of \$3.5 million) and build or facilitate the construction of a trail system to serve the recreational, health, and mobility needs of County residents.

### ***K. Schools***

The Augusta County School Board operates eleven (11) elementary schools, four middle schools and five high schools (20 total). Additionally, Administrative offices, as well as School Maintenance and Bus/Vehicle facilities, are maintained. Since the 2007 Comprehensive Plan, additions/renovations have been completed at Stuarts Draft and Wilson Memorial High Schools and Wilson Elementary Schools. In addition, the Administrative Offices of the School Board have been relocated to the Government Center complex in Verona, although the School Maintenance and Bus/Vehicle facilities have remained in Fishersville.

Since the 2007 Comprehensive Plan, the School Average Daily Membership (ADM) has fluctuated from a low 10,410,667 in 2013-14 to a high of 11,040 in 2007. The 2015 ADM estimate is 10,250. During this same period, the county's new housing starts and population has increased, although the rate of increase has slowed dramatically from previous years. The population increase averaged less than 0.4% per year and the number of new single family detached dwellings fell from 335 in 2007 to 147 in 2013. The school division has experienced a decrease in K-12 ADM for a number of years.

The following chart reflects by school the year the facility was constructed/renovated as well as the September 2014 ADM and program capacity.

	<u>Const/Renov-Exp.</u>	<u>Sept. ADM*</u>	<u>Program Capacity</u>
<b><u>Elementary</u></b>			
**Beverley Manor	1961/1974	342	520 (0 in 2017)
Hugh Cassell Churchville	1973/1993/2017	465	500 (750 in 2017)
Clymore	2000	295	540
Craigsville	1995	608	750
	1931/1974/1999	128	360
North River	1999/1970 (small wing)	251	440
Riverheads	1970/1974/1993/2017	523	600 (750 in 2017)
Stuarts Draft	1995	656	750
Stump	1955/1968/1979/1999	328	480
**Verona	1967/1976	304	420 (0 in 2017)
Wilson	1958/1967/1977/1993/2013	654	750
		<u>4,911</u>	<u>6,110 (5,570 in 2017)</u>
<b><u>Middle</u></b>			
Beverley Manor	1988/1993	730	800
Stewart	1980	591	720
Stuarts Draft	1978/1993	537	960
Wilson	2006/2016	580	520 (750 in 2016)
		<u>2,438</u>	<u>3,000 (3,230 in 2016)</u>
<b><u>High School</u></b>			
Buffalo Gap	1962/1969/1997	520	740
Fort Defiance	1962/1975/1996	786	960
Riverheads	1962/1976/1997	490	600
Stuarts Draft	1970/2007	701	940
Wilson	1970/2007	784	900
		<u>3,281</u>	<u>4,140</u>
	Totals:	10,273	13,200 (12,940 in 2017)

\*In addition to the ADM number used for funding, the division serves approximately 260 pre-school students in the elementary schools.

\*\* School to be mothballed in the spring of 2017. Augusta County will maintain these buildings on their inventory of facilities.

The School Board's capital program currently reflects the following projects:

### **1. Elementary Schools**

- Construction of a new Hugh Cassell Elementary \$18.1m
- Construction of a new Riverheads Elementary \$18.6m

The School Board approved the closing of Ladd Elementary at the end of the 2012-2013 school year. New Riverheads and Cassell Elementary Schools will address growth concerns and replace aging facilities.

### **2. Middle Schools**

- Expansion of Wilson Middle School (by fall of 2016) \$4.0m

The School Board will continue to analyze programming, transportation and operational efficiencies as it relates to the construction of additional middle schools. Growth anticipated by the Comprehensive Plan will impact the decision on whether to:

- Continue to share a middle school for Buffalo Gap and Riverheads (Beverley Manor – status quo)
- Construct middle school annex(es) to Buffalo Gap and Riverheads High Schools
- Construct stand-alone middle schools
- Expand capacity at existing middle schools

Contributing factors include availability of land and utilization of Beverley Manor Middle School for other purposes.

The cost for two middle schools could range from \$15 million to \$20 million each.

### **3. High Schools**

The Comprehensive Plan and growth forecasts in school attendance zones will determine if existing high schools can accommodate growth and whether further evaluation is necessary. If required, boundary line adjustments will be made to equalize school attendance zones

### **4. School Support Facilities**

School Administrative offices relocated to existing space at the Government Center complex in Verona in the spring/summer of 2013. Maintenance facilities and Bus/Vehicle Garage are currently located in surplus military (WWII) structures in Fishersville. While meeting some immediate needs, the complete consolidation of school support facilities at a single location remains a capital need of the county and is estimated to cost \$10 million.

***L. Sinking Funds***

The board in the CIP has established a number of funds to address ongoing capital replacement/improvements:

Building and Grounds – Roofs, Carpets, Painting, HVAC, Solid Waste Centers	\$400,000/year
Fire & Rescue Equipment (Volunteer)	\$200,000/year
Fire Vehicle/Equipment/Replacement	\$400,000/year
Fire Training Center	\$40,000/year
Sheriff Equipment	\$100,000/year
IT/GIS	\$150,000/year
Security Equipment	\$40,000/year
Flood Control Dams	\$100,000/year
Vehicles	\$250,000/year
Utilities	\$200,000/year
BRCC – Local participation	\$100,000/year
Infrastructure	\$1,400,000/year
Recreation Matching Grants	\$210,000/year
Parks and Recreation	\$100,000/year
Landfill- Post Closure	\$742,000/year
Library	\$10,000/year
Emergency Communications Center	\$200,000/year
Total	\$4,642,000/year

The 5 year projected cost is \$23.2 million. Years 6-20 long-term projected cost would be \$69.5 million. In addition, as the County constructs stormwater management facilities to meet the MS4 requirements, maintenance of the County’s stormwater infrastructure will need to be added to the budget. Based on industry standards, the County can expect to spend 1.23-6.15 million per year in maintenance. No figures have been added to the sinking funds to cover these costs, but will need to be added once a construction schedule has been established and maintenance requirements determined.

***M. Solid Waste Management***

The current landfill opened in 1998. The estimated life cycle is 2050. Members of the Regional Landfill include the cities of Staunton and Waynesboro and the County of Augusta. Highland County is permitted to use the landfill as a non-member jurisdiction (1% of tonnage). Operating and capital obligations are shared by the member jurisdictions based upon tonnage. A five percent (5%) host fee is paid to Augusta County by the two cities (offsetting loss of property tax revenues associated with having the landfill sited in the county, as well as other government services, i.e., roads, trash collection, law enforcement, fire, etc.).

The five-year cost for cell development and capitalized equipment is \$6.1 million. The twenty-year cost is \$29.2 million. The county’s share of costs based upon the current formula

(tonnage/host fee at 53.35%) would be \$3.2 million (5 years) and \$15.6 million (20 years) respectively.

Within the next five years, it is envisioned that two additional solid waste transfer stations will be needed to address service demands. Estimated cost is 2 @ \$250,000 = \$500,000.

## ***N. Stormwater Management***

Analysis of the capital costs of stormwater management (SWM) facilities in Augusta County and throughout the nation shows that the actual costs are highly variable depending upon the specific characteristics of the area served and the design of the system. Costs can range from a few hundred dollars per dwelling unit to several thousand dollars per dwelling unit depending upon the size of the area served, the type of improvements constructed and the density and number of houses served.

It has been the county's policy to require commercial and industrial concerns to provide for their own stormwater management. With residential development, it is preferred that stormwater management systems be maintained by property owners/homeowners associations. The county's policy does allow for residential facilities with a capacity of 15,000 ft<sup>3</sup> to be built by developer and dedicated to and maintained by the county once eighty-five percent 85% of lots are built on.

In 2014, the county became a regulated Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) community and a Virginia Stormwater Management Program (VSMP) Authority. These programs, which are mandated by state code, will significantly increase the level of investment in stormwater management infrastructure, and will require that the county plan for the associated long term maintenance responsibilities. The VSMP program will lead to additional privately funded facilities for the county to maintain in residential subdivisions and the MS4 program, in order to meet yet to be determined Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) discharge limits, will require significant investment on the county's part for planning, design, construction and maintenance. While the MS4 plan has not yet been fully developed, it is likely that the county will need to retrofit stormwater management measures into existing developed areas to meet required pollutant reductions.

The county has designated \$20,000 for MS4 program development in FY 14-15. In order to determine the precise needs and priorities for improvements, the county can explore the feasibility of carrying out more detailed studies of countywide stormwater management needs.

The cost of a countywide study could exceed \$1 million. The cost to fund regional stormwater detention facilities could exceed \$25 million. The industry standard to maintain stormwater infrastructure averages \$30/acre/year to \$150/acre/year depending upon density. Considering the acreage in Urban Service Areas (41,000 acres plus/minus) the cost would be \$1,230,000 to \$6,150,000 annually. Many communities are enacting stormwater management fees to offset the construction and maintenance costs of these facilities.



## ***O. Transportation***

Although transportation facilities are primarily the responsibility of the Virginia Department of Transportation, estimates of future capital costs are included here in order to provide a framework for understanding the magnitude of transportation needs which the county will face as growth continues.

However, accurately estimating future capital costs for transportation improvements is virtually impossible due to four major factors:

- Local road needs will be greatly affected by the traffic levels and patterns generated by through traffic that originates outside the county, yet these traffic impacts are not known; and
- The extent, location and design of road improvements are not known and are also likely to change substantially over the course of time; and
- The extent to which the distributed road network envisioned in the Comp Plan is implemented; and
- The needs for specific improvements to the road network will likely emerge in an unpredictable pattern due to the size of the areas committed for urban development. The actual costs and locations of road improvements can vary greatly over time and space within the designated growth areas. The costs will occur in a somewhat dispersed pattern.

A further complicating factor in making cost estimates and forecasts is that the future sources, amounts and distribution of funding for improvements are not known and are likely to change substantially over the course of time.

These major unknown factors make the cost estimates for transportation facilities even more uncertain than for most other long term capital costs estimates. Therefore, this analysis is based upon the following set of significant assumptions:

- Because transportation needs – particularly road improvement needs – greatly exceed all expected funding levels, the estimates included here are guided largely by those funding limitations rather than by the actual needs for road improvements described by the policies of the Comprehensive Plan;
- The county will continue to participate in the VDOT revenue sharing program for secondary roads;
- Funding for construction of all new local streets within a new development will be provided by the developers of such projects;
- Improvements and additions to local arterial roads serving the urbanizing areas will require secondary and primary road funding;
- If major improvements to road networks are achieved in the urbanizing areas, the funding for such improvements will come from increases in allocations from the local, state and/or federal governments and from investments by developers through proffer contributions and tax increment financing;

The 2015 Secondary Roads Six-Year Construction Program lists 17 projects totaling \$47.7 million. There is approximately \$28.2million in previous funding, however, additional funding available in the FY 15-20 Secondary Six Year Plan for allocation to projects was less than \$9 million. For comparison purposes, the original FY03-08 Six-Year Plan was \$30.7 million (71% reduction). Additionally, the state’s Revenue Sharing Program provides additional funding for use by the county to construct or improve the highway systems within the county, with statutory limitations on the amount of state funds authorized per locality. Locality funds are matched with state funds for qualifying projects. An annual allocation of funds for this program is designated by the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB). Application for program funding must be made by resolution of the governing body with appropriate forms as outlined in the Revenue Sharing guidelines. Project administration may be accomplished by the Department of Transportation or by the locality, under an agreement with the Department. Augusta County has taken advantage of the Revenue Sharing program in the past and continues to plan to request funds for future projects. With the Secondary program being reduced, the revenue sharing program is quickly becoming one of the best options available to fund and complete future road projects. With regard to the Interstate/Primary Six-Year Plan, there are fifteen (15) projects listed totaling \$67.1 million. There is nearly \$30.9 in previous funding and \$29.5 million available in future allocations. If this funding remains true, there is a \$6.7 million shortfall in needed funding. The county will continue to evaluate traffic impact studies at the time of major development project rezonings to analyze on and offsite traffic impacts on the county’s road system. Developer proffers and, when mutually advantageous, Tax Increment Financing (TIF) will be considered to address system deficiencies and needed improvements. The possibility exists to structure “Privilege Fee” arrangements when a developer builds road improvements which may benefit other developable properties.

The funding to address paving of gravel roads can provide insight into the magnitude of costs necessary to funding transportation improvements:

$$275^* \text{ miles} \times \$1,100,000^{**} = \$275,000,000$$

\* Number of gravel miles

\*\* Base estimate per mile for a “regular” project. Cost for Rural Rustic \$400,000 per mile.

The best estimate for future funding on an annual basis:

	<b>County</b>	<b>State</b>	<b>Total</b>
Revenue Sharing	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000	\$2,000,000
Secondary Six-Year Plan	<u>-0-</u>	<u>1,000,000</u>	<u>1,000,000</u>
	\$1,000,000	\$2,000,000	\$3,000,000

The 2014-2018 estimate would be \$15,000,000. The 2018-2034 estimate would be \$60,000,000. Without additional state, local and developer funding, construction funding will be inadequate to address transportation needs.

***P. Water and Sewer***

Public water and sewer service is provided by the Augusta County Service Authority. The Service Authority was established in 1966 by action of the Board of Supervisors and chartered by the State Corporation Commission. The Service Authority Board of Directors, consisting of seven members appointed by the Augusta County Board of Supervisors, is responsible for providing water and sewer service to county residents. The Authority is subject to regulatory directives of both state and federal agencies, including the Safe Drinking Water Act, the Clean Water Act, Homeland Security and initiatives to clean the Chesapeake Bay. Regulatory compliance impacts issues regarding infrastructure, as well as the demand for more advanced levels of treatment for water and wastewater.

The Service Authority’s CIP separates capital needs into two sub areas- water system and wastewater system. Projected costs for the CIP are as follows:

<b>Improvements</b>	<b>2014-2018</b>	<b>2019-2034</b>	<b>Development Driven</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
Water System	27.5m	21.4m	26.4m	75.3m
Sewer System	1.8m	19.6m	4.8m	26.2m
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>29.3m</b>	<b>41.0m</b>	<b>31.2m</b>	<b>101.5m</b>

The Service Authority’s funding sources include budgeted revenues from rate payers, Virginia Resources Authority (VRA) low interest loans, regulatory agency grants and capital reserves (generated from connection fees and rate payer revenue).

Countywide projects identified in the Comprehensive Plan, as well as economic development initiatives, that benefit businesses and citizens outside the existing customer base typically require supplemental funding from the county in order to provide full funding for the county projects to minimize the impact on Service Authority capital needs.