

Attachment A – Comprehensive Plan Introduction

INTRODUCTION

A Comprehensive Plan guides the growth and development of a community. It articulates the goals and policies that the Board of County Supervisors relies on to make informed land use development decisions and investments in public infrastructure. It also presents a blueprint for creating a great quality of place, quality of community and quality of life based on the County's vision for its future.

The Prince William County Comprehensive Plan follows the County's vision, Prince William 2030 and Region Forward, a regional planning effort. It provides a critical link between the vision and the many implementing plans and policies of the County. The Comprehensive Plan is based on an analysis of current land use and future growth and the facilities needed to serve existing and future residents – such as roads, parks, water and sewer systems, schools, fire stations, police facilities, and libraries.

The Comprehensive Plan consists of five major components:

1. Long-Range Land Use
2. Community Development
3. Infrastructure and Facilities
4. Conservation/Preservation
5. Small Area/Sector Plans

Each component is made up of issue specific plans (or chapters) and each plan contains goals, policies and action strategies. Additionally, each plan can have informational appendices, level of service standards, related studies or other associated policy documents. Finally, almost every plan has a map or series of maps that illustrate or identify important features of the plan.

VISION

Prince William County's vision, Prince William 2030, contains seven key themes:

- **A Live, Work, Play and Retire Community** – In 2030, residents have all the major amenities available in their community – housing, jobs, lifelong education, medical care, assisted living, recreation and leisure, arts and culture. Catering to its residents' needs and wants, Prince William County is a self-sustaining community.
- **Active, Engaged Citizens** – The County has a highly involved citizenry. Whether weighing in on issues before the Board of County Supervisors, voting in elections, serving on volunteer boards and commissions, maintaining attractive neighborhoods or partnering with local schools, an extraordinary number of our citizens and businesses actively participate in the affairs of local communities.
- **Sense of Community** – Residents are proud to call Prince William County home, proud to tell others about the strong sense of community which encompasses all who live here. As a Stonewall Jackson high school student told the *Future Commission 2030*, "Prince William County embraces the diversity it contains and turns it into a positive benefit for the community." Working together, our community takes advantage of the experiences, talents and assets of all residents.

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- **Accessible Community** – We take the term “accessibility” to new levels in 2030. With virtually all public services available electronically, 24/7 transportation options that accommodate seniors and persons with disabilities, housing available for all income levels, and major amenities dispersed throughout the County, our communities are accessible to all.
- **Infrastructure Matches Population** – From transportation and education to arts and culture, human services, open space and recreation, Prince William County is remarkable for providing sufficient infrastructure to meet its residents’ needs, even as the population continues to grow and diversify.
- **Partnerships Equal Success** – The majority of our public initiatives and community services are delivered through partnerships. Leveraging the strengths and resources of multiple organizations is the normal way of doing business in 2030. Government and non-profits, public schools and arts organizations, universities and local employers, environmental groups and public agencies, even multiple communities work as partners to achieve larger goals.
- **Leading the Way** – In 2030, Prince William County is a role model in many areas. From the provision of public services to protecting our natural resources, we lead the Commonwealth of Virginia and, in many cases, the nation. Not satisfied with average performance, our community always strives to excel.

These themes run throughout the Comprehensive Plan.

REGION FORWARD

Another vision document influencing the Comprehensive Plan is *Region Forward – A Comprehensive Guide for Regional Planning and Measuring Progress in the 21st Century*. Region Forward is the vision document that guides the work of the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (MWCOG). As a voting member, Prince William County supports the vision outlined in the Region Forward Plan. Region Forward is a commitment by MWCOG and its member governments, who together seek to create a more accessible, sustainable, prosperous, and livable National Capital Region. MWCOG’s mission is to make Region Forward happen by being a discussion forum, expert resource, issue advocate, and catalyst for action. The vision established in the Region Forward Plan is based on goals shared by residents, business and nonprofit leaders, and elected officials across metropolitan Washington. These goals map out where the region wants to go over the next several decades and encourages leaders to think about the regional impact of local decisions. They also permeate the policies of the Prince William County Comprehensive Plan. The nineteen (19) goals of Region Forward are as follows:

1. Land Use
 - a. We seek the enhancement of established neighborhoods of differing densities with compact, walkable infill development, rehabilitation and retention of historic sites and districts, and preservation of open space, farmland and environmental resource land in rural areas.
 - b. We seek transit-oriented and mixed-use communities emerging in Regional Activity Centers that will capture new employment and household growth.

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2. Transportation
 - a. We seek a broad range of public and private transportation choices for our Region, which maximizes accessibility and affordability to everyone and minimizes reliance upon single occupancy use of the automobile.
 - b. We seek a transportation system that maximizes community connectivity and walkability, and minimizes ecological harm to the Region and world beyond.
3. Environmental
 - a. We seek to maximize protection and enhancement of the Region’s environmental resources by meeting and exceeding standards for our air, water, and land.
 - b. We seek preservation and enhancement of our Region’s open space, green space, and wildlife preserves.
4. Climate & Energy
 - a. We seek a significant decrease in greenhouse gas emissions, with substantial reductions from the built environment and transportation sector.
 - b. We seek efficient public and private use of energy Region-wide, with reliance upon renewable energy and alternative fuels for buildings, vehicles, and public transportation.
5. Economic
 - a. We seek a diversified, stable, and competitive economy, with a wide range of employment opportunities and a focus on sustainable economic development.
 - b. We seek to minimize economic disparities and enhance the prosperity of each jurisdiction and the Region as a whole through balanced growth and access to high-quality jobs for everyone.
 - c. We seek to fully recognize and enhance the benefits that accrue to the region as the seat of the National government and as a world capital.
6. Housing
 - a. We seek a variety of housing types and choices in diverse, vibrant, safe, healthy, and sustainable neighborhoods, affordable to persons at all income levels.
 - b. We seek to make the production, preservation, and distribution of affordable housing a priority throughout the Region.
7. Health & Human Services
 - a. We seek healthy communities with greater access to quality health care and a focus on wellness and prevention.
 - b. We seek to provide access and delivery of quality social services to all residents.
8. Education
 - a. We seek to provide greater access to the best education at all levels, from pre-kindergarten to graduate school.
 - b. We seek to make our Region a preeminent knowledge hub, through educational venues, workforce development, and institutional collaboration.
9. Public Safety
 - a. We seek safe communities for residents and visitors.
 - b. We seek partnerships that manage emergencies, protect the public health, safety, welfare, and preserve the lives, property and economic well-being of the region and its residents.

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PURPOSE OF THE PLAN

In accordance with §15.2-2223, Code of Virginia, Ann., this comprehensive plan for the physical development of Prince William County, Virginia, is made with the purpose of guiding and accomplishing a coordinated, adjusted and harmonious development of the County which will, in accordance with present and probable future needs and resources, best promote the health, safety, morals, order, convenience, prosperity and general welfare of the inhabitants, including the elderly and persons with disabilities. Development of this plan is based on careful and comprehensive surveys and studies of the existing conditions and trends of growth, and of the probable future requirements the County and its inhabitants. The comprehensive plan is general in nature, in that it designates the general or approximate location, character, and extent of each feature, including any road improvement and any transportation improvement, shown on the plan and indicates where existing lands or facilities are proposed to be extended, widened, removed, relocated, vacated, narrowed, abandoned, or changed in use as the case may be.

The Prince William Board of County Supervisors first adopted a Comprehensive Plan in 1974. New plans or updates to an existing plan were adopted by the Board in 1982, 1986, 1989, 1990, 1998, 2003, and 2008. In 2008 a series of incremental updates began resulting in major updates to the Housing, Long-Range Land Use, Transportation and Environment chapters completed in 2010.

The Comprehensive Plan is prepared and then recommended by the Prince William County Planning Commission at a public hearing or hearings, and forwarded to the Board of County Supervisors for public hearing and adoption.

The Comprehensive Plan is available on-line on the County's web site at www.pwcgov.org/CompPlan.

ORGANIZATION OF THE PLAN

The goals, policies and action strategies of the Comprehensive Plan are organized in chapters or plans dealing with a specific issue related to the physical development of the County. These chapters are grouped into four main categories: Long-Range Land Use, Community Development, Infrastructure and Facilities, and Preservation and Conservation. This general framework for the development of the County is supported by detailed sector plans and small area plans that provide goals, policies and action strategies for small geographic areas throughout the County. The following is an outline of the Plan:

- Introduction
- Long-Range Land Use
- Community Development
 - Community Design
 - Economic Development
 - Housing
- Infrastructure and Facilities
 - Fire and Rescue
 - Libraries

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- Parks
- Police
- Potable Water
- Sanitary Sewer
- Schools
- Telecommunications
- Transportation
- Preservation and Conservation
 - Cultural Resources
 - Environment
 - Open Space
- Sector Plans/Small Area Plans

IMPLEMENTING PLANS AND POLICIES

The following plans and policies implement or contribute to the implementation of the Comprehensive Plan:

- **The Strategic Plan** is a document designed to establish a blueprint for achieving the community’s long-term vision. As such, it sets out a limited number of the community’s high-priority goals in four-year increments. In doing so, the Strategic Plan provides crucial policy guidance for service delivery and resource allocation decisions.
- **The Principles of Sound Financial Management**, established by the Board of County Supervisors, provides policy guidance for the County’s financial decisions. Prince William County has a long-standing commitment to sound financial management. These principles were first adopted in 1988 and receive regular updates to ensure their continued usefulness for decision-making. The sound financial management of the County’s resources is achieved by following the consistent and coordinated approach provided by this policy document. These principles include policy statements on such issues as the County’s Capital Improvements Plan (CIP), the Annual Fiscal Plan, and debt management.
- **The Constrained Long-Range Transportation Plan (CLRP)**, adopted by the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (MWCOC), is a 25-year multi-modal transportation plan for the Washington, DC metropolitan area. Federal law requires that this plan be “constrained” in two ways: first, by being fiscally realistic, with all projects in the plan having funding sources identified for their implementation; and second, by conforming in its entirety with emissions budgets established by the EPA.
- **The Infrastructure and Facilities Plan (IFP)** is included as an appendix in the appropriate chapters of the CIP and includes information regarding suggested public facilities on a 20-year horizon. The Comprehensive Plan will provide input to the IFP. The IFP will be regularly updated, as the planned facilities may change based on changing community goals, service-delivery, or land use and/or demographic patterns.

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- **The Capital Improvements Program (CIP)** – The CIP specifies the capital infrastructure and facilities projects that are firmly scheduled for funding over a six-year period, in order to: achieve the community’s long-range vision; achieve the 20-year goals of the Comprehensive Plan and the shorter-term goals of the Strategic Plan, and maintain or enhance the County’s capital assets and delivery of services. In addition, the CIP describes funding mechanisms for these projects, including debt financing, cash-to-capital, and the use of proffers.
- **Annual Fiscal Plan** – Each year, the Board of County Supervisors adopts an annual budget for all County government operations. The budget is based on estimates of projected expenditures for County programs as well as the means of paying for those expenditures (revenues). Program expenditures are determined based on “outcome budgeting” – on achieving desired outcomes, outputs, service quality, and efficiencies (Prince William County’s “family” of performance measures) for each activity in each agency of County government. The Board of County Supervisors makes budget decisions based on its established policy guidance; (e.g., Strategic Plan, Comprehensive Plan, and the service level targets found in agency program budgets). Outcome budgets also allow citizens to see the County’s future direction and what their tax dollars are really buying.
- **Five-Year Budget Plan** – This Plan forecasts the revenue and expenditures (both capital and operating) of the County for five years. As such, it assists the Board and the community in gauging the multi-year impacts of fiscal decisions and in weighing the corresponding implications of tax rates and other revenue sources. The County’s Five-Year Budget Plan is combined with the Five-Year Budget Plan prepared by the Prince William County schools to provide a total picture of the General Fund requirements for the upcoming five-year period.
- **Virginia Six-Year Transportation Plan** – The Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) Six-Year Transportation Plan for primary roads (with identification numbers less than 600 like Rt. 234) and secondary roads (with identification numbers 600 or above). The Transportation Development Plan is adopted by the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB). The Chairman of the Prince William Board of County Supervisors traditionally testifies during the CTB public hearings as to Prince William County’s priorities.
- **Zoning Ordinance** – This ordinance, adopted pursuant to the Virginia Code, is for the general purpose of promoting the health, safety, and general welfare of the public; providing for development of new community centers with adequate highway, utility, health, educational, and recreational facilities; recognizing and providing for the needs of agriculture, industry, and business; providing that the growth of the community be consistent with the efficient and economical use of public funds; and implementing the intent, goals, policies, and action strategies of the adopted comprehensive plan. The intent of the Zoning Ordinance is to provide for adequate light, air, convenience of access, and safety from fire, flood, and other dangers; reduce or prevent congestion;

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facilitate the provision of adequate public facilities; and provide other elements of sound community planning.

- **Design and Construction Standards Manual (DCSM)** – The DCSM sets forth the engineering and development standards for new construction of required public improvements, as well as for protection and enhancement of the environment. It also effectuates and supplements the requirements of the Comprehensive Plan and the Zoning Ordinance, as well as other state and federal regulations.
- **Subdivision Ordinance** – The purpose of the Subdivision Ordinance is to implement the County Comprehensive Plan, to encourage the orderly subdivision of land, to improve the public health, safety, convenience, and welfare of the citizens of the County, to ensure that the County land records remain clear, and that certain basic requirements are met for development of building lots, and to provide for the construction of required public improvements.
- **Consolidated Housing and Community Development Plan:** This plan, as approved by the Board of County Supervisors, is prepared by the Office of Housing and Community Development (OHCD) and outlines the vision for providing decent housing, a suitable living environment, and expanded economic opportunities for low- and moderate-income households. The Plan is required by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development in order for the County to receive Community Development Block Grants, HOME Investment Partnership funds, Emergency Shelter Grants, and American Dream Down Payment Initiative funding. It is a five-year plan that is the basis for annual funding allocations, described in one-year Action Plans, which identify the specific programs and activities to be undertaken annually with federal funds. OHCD also prepares the Action Plans, which are approved by the Board. The Consolidated Housing and Community Development Plan is updated every five (5) years.