

## IV. Goals, Objectives, and Policies

### *A. Introduction: Overall County Vision*

At their visioning workshops of September 13<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup>, 2006, the Board of Supervisors, Planning Commission, and Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee affirmed the vision concepts and the broad goals and strategies of the 1994 Plan. While the original vision statement from 1994 still reflects the county's basic values and desires concerning its future, a new vision statement provides insight gained from more than a decade of implementing the original plan and a more focused view of the future. Thus, a narrative description of Augusta County 20 or more years in the future, that reflects the essential values of county citizens, as expressed by the county leaders working on their behalf, 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.

### *B. Strategies for Growth*

In addition to the vision statement from the 1994 Plan was 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 group at the two September workshops and is included largely 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 42 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.

### **1. Planning Policy Areas**

The Planning Policy Areas and the Future Land Use Categories also work to implement the county’s vision. As a result of the Comprehensive Plan update process, the number of Planning Policy Areas has been reduced from six to four. The two Policy Areas that were removed were those designated “potential” by the 1994 Plan. These Potential Urban Service and Potential Community Development Areas were removed in order to more efficiently implement the goals of this Plan, since they often led to confusion regarding the amount and type of development permitted within them. 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 update has been focused on maintaining the rural character of the county and a belief that too much growth has been occurring in the rural areas. In the last four years over

70% of residential growth has been occurring in the newly defined Urban Service and Community Development Areas, so increasing this to 90% should be attainable if the recommendations of the Plan are implemented. **Table 3** provides a statistical breakdown of the County by Planning Policy Area.

**Table 3. Acreage by Planning Policy Area**

<b>Policy Area</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Urban Service Area	40,574	6.6%
Community Development Area	34,881	5.6%
Rural Conservation Area	82,948	13.4%
Agricultural Conservation Area	246,901	39.8%
Public Land	214,409	34.6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>619,713</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Source: Augusta County GIS

### **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. These areas are designated with a future land use of Rural Community on the Planning Policy Area/Future Land Use Map.

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.

## **2. 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 eleven 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
- **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
- **Rural Community**, where an appropriate mix of uses may be found that conforms to the established development pattern in a rural community; 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
- **Flood Plain**, which includes lands identified by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) as prone to flooding during a 100-year flood event and therefore unsuitable for most land uses

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 4** provides a statistical breakdown of the future land use categories.

**Table 4. Acreage by Future Land Use Category**

<b>Future Land Use</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Industrial	5,807	7.7%
Business	4,216	5.6%
Public Use	2,752	3.7%
Community Mixed Use	3,462	4.6%
Neighborhood Mixed Use	3,357	4.4%
Multifamily Residential	824	1.1%
Single-Family Attached Residential	862	1.1%
Medium Density Residential	14,695	19.5%
Planned Residential	2,880	3.8%
Low Density Residential	30,728	40.7%
Rural Community	1,019	1.4%
Urban Open Space	537	0.7%
Flood Plain	4,316	5.7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>75,455</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Source: Augusta County GIS

## ***C. 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:* Director of Agriculture Development. Support the Director of Agriculture Development position. The Director should serve as staff to the Agriculture Industry Board. The Director should be responsible for agricultural program administration, leadership, and advocacy focused on sustaining agriculture programs and improving the economic viability of agriculture and forestry in Augusta County. The Director of Agriculture Development and the Virginia Cooperative Extension Service should work with landowners who want their land to remain in agricultural production to ensure that their land remains productive.

*Policy 3:* Promotion and Education. The Director of Agriculture Development 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 add 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.



*Policy 3: Purchase of Development Rights.* The county should establish a purchase of development rights (PDR) program to protect farmland, open space, community character, and natural resources within the county. The purchase of development rights program should encourage the placement of conservation easements on property in the Agricultural Conservation and Rural Conservation Areas. The county should provide a consistent and sufficient level of funding to the PDR program to ensure its success.

*Policy 4: Transfer of Development Rights.* The county should explore the feasibility of establishing a transferable development rights program.

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.* 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 Enterprise District.* The county should explore the establishment of an Agricultural Enterprise District through the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services and the utilization of the Agricultural Enterprise Grant program for qualified businesses to develop and implement business plans.

*Policy 3: Agricultural Tourism:* The county should explore the expansion of its agri-tourism industry. The county should explore amendments to its ordinances to encourage compatible agri-tourism businesses and should encourage the linkage of the tourism and agriculture industries in area-wide economic development strategies.

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.

*Policy 1: Agricultural Education and Youth Programs.* The Board of Supervisors and the School Board should vigorously support agriculture education and youth programs. New and innovative programs should be implemented that will encourage young people to develop entrepreneurial

skills, learn from mentors in the agri-business community, and create new and diverse agriculture enterprises.

**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.

*Policy 1:* Establishment and Expansion of Intensive Agricultural Operations. The county should encourage intensive agricultural operations in the Agricultural Conservation Areas, requiring only relatively minimal setbacks from neighboring properties and residentially zoned property. The county should discourage such operations from locating in the Community Development and Urban Service Areas, with strict standards in terms of setback requirements on the farm property. The county should allow expansion of existing intensive agriculture operations in the Rural Conservation Areas in accord with the policies for those areas contained in this Plan.

*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 appropriate permitted uses and restricted uses in the agricultural zoning districts.

*Policy 4:* Reciprocal Setbacks. Reciprocal setbacks should be implemented for single-family and multi-family housing located in or adjacent to the Rural Conservation or Agricultural Conservation Areas.

*Policy 5:* 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.

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

*Policy 1:* 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, with a minimum lot size of one acre. The county should require conventional residential subdivisions to have a minimum lot size of two acres.

*Policy 2: Residential Development in the Agricultural Conservation Areas.* In the designated Agricultural Conservation Areas, the county should require new lots to be a minimum of one acre. The county should strongly discourage rural cluster developments as well as conventional residential rezonings and subdivisions.

Objective C: Reduce the number and size of new residential lots being created in the Rural Conservation and Agricultural Conservation Areas.

*Policy 1: Lot Creation.* 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 2: Annual Report.* Data such as the percentage of minor subdivision lots created in each Planning Policy Area and zoning district should be included as part of the annual Comprehensive Plan review process.

*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 semi-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 profitable 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 conservation plan for their farming operation or a forest management plan for their forestry operation.

*Policy 3: Nutrient Management Plans.* The county should continue to require nutrient management plans for new intensive agriculture facilities.

*Policy 4: Public Education.* The county should make available, to all county farmers and foresters, information on environmentally sound practices and the federal, state, and local programs that encourage them.

#### ***D. Economy***

**Goal 1:** 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.

Objective A: Prepare, with public input, and adopt a strategic plan for the economic development of the county. The strategic plan should include strategies for retaining and expanding the businesses and industries now operating in the county.

*Policy 1: Develop an Existing Industry Program.* The strategic plan should make recommendations on how the county should work to improve its outreach efforts for existing businesses and industries.

*Policy 2: Training.* The strategic plan should make recommendations for developing a workforce training program to ensure that existing businesses and industries have a sufficient supply of skilled and well-trained workers available.

*Policy 3: Financial Incentives for Expanding Existing Businesses.* The strategic plan should make recommendations on the establishment of a financial incentive program to encourage and assist existing businesses and industries in expanding their operations.

**Goal 2:** 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.

Objective A: Prepare, with public input, and adopt a strategic plan for the economic development of the county. The strategic plan should identify the strengths and weaknesses of the county and develop an action plan for attracting new industries that are compatible with the county.

*Policy 1: Target Industries.* The strategic plan should research and make recommendations on which types of businesses and industries are most compatible with Augusta County's strengths and assets. The county should focus its business promotion and recruitment efforts on the target industries identified by the strategic plan.

*Policy 2: Recruitment of Business.* The strategic plan should make recommendations on strategies the county should employ for recruiting new businesses and industries. The county should be proactive in seeking to recruit new businesses and industries.

*Policy 3: Identify Sites.* The strategic plan should identify the best potential industrial and business sites which are suitably located and which have adequate land, roads, and utilities to support business and industrial development.

*Policy 4: Office of Economic Development.* The strategic plan should make recommendations on the establishment of an Office of Economic Development or additional staffing in the Community Development Department to be responsible for business and industrial recruitment and retention in the county.

*Policy 5: 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 the loss of businesses and industries by attracting new businesses and industries that will help to regain that balance. The strategic plan should make specific recommendations on how the county should respond to changes in its business and industry base.

*Policy 6: Training.* The strategic plan should make recommendations on how the county should develop a training program to provide training to ensure an adequate trained and skilled labor force to meet the needs of the identified target businesses and industries.

*Policy 7: Marketing Strategies.* The strategic plan should make recommendations on how the county can market itself for potential new businesses and industries. The marketing strategies may include improvements to 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.

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

*Policy 1: Suitable Locations.* Ensure that new business and industrial development occurs in suitable locations and is compatible with existing and planned adjacent land uses.

**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.

Objective D: Maintain or improve the county's ratio of population to jobs.

Objective E: Increase the coordination of economic development efforts with the state as well as with neighboring jurisdictions.

*Policy 1: Shenandoah Valley Partnership.* Continue to participate in and support the economic development efforts of the Shenandoah Valley Partnership.

*Policy 2: 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 website and in other similar programs.

**Goal 3:** 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.* Economic development staff, in cooperation with the Director of Agriculture Development, 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 continuing work of the Cooperative Extension Service in providing technical assistance to the local agricultural industry.

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

*Policy 3: Agricultural Tourism.* The county should explore and promote all possibilities for expanding agricultural tourism.

## ***E. Education***

**Goal 1:** Ensure that the county's public education facilities and services meet the needs of local residents by producing well educated graduates that are prepared for a lifetime of learning and for working in tomorrow's economy.

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 new and upgraded public school facilities to ensure that they are located efficiently and cost-effectively.

*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. 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 growth, the age of the existing facilities, their remaining productive life and the ability to deliver special programs and 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, consider their potential impact on the school system so as to minimize school crowding.

*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.* 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.

*Policy 6: Safe Routes to School Program.* The county should pursue grants from the Virginia Safe Routes to School Program to infill pedestrian and cycling infrastructure to improve safety near elementary and middle schools.

*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, 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 educational programs to ensure that they are established, maintained, and delivered in an efficient, equitable, and cost-effective manner.

*Policy 1: Curriculum.* The strategic plan should make recommendations on how the public schools can provide the most rigorous, relevant, and diverse curriculum possible.

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

*Policy 3: Staffing.* The strategic plan should recommend programs to maintain 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 potential new career and technical education programs that will assist young people as they attempt to acquire the education and experience they will need 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.

*Policy 6: Continuing Education.* The strategic plan should recommend ways in which the percentage of students continuing their education beyond the high school level can be increased.

*Policy 7: Graduation Rate.* The strategic plan should recommend ways in which the percentage of students graduating from the county's high schools can be increased.

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.



*Policy 1: Contributions from Developers.* The county should explore the options available for collecting contributions from developers to help offset the costs of providing additional school facilities and services for new residential developments.

*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 home schooled.

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

Objective B: Continue to support area colleges and adult education facilities.

*Policy 1: Blue Ridge Community College.* The county should continue to provide support to Blue Ridge Community College.

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

## ***F. 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.

Objective B: 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: 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.

Objective C: 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.

*Policy 2: Coordinated Emergency Services Programs.* The county should work with the cities of Staunton and Waynesboro to provide backup Emergency Operations 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 Vocational-Technical Center and the Central Shenandoah Valley Regional Governor's School.

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 so that all residents receive their fair share of facilities and services and contribute their fair share of funding for those facilities and services.

Objective A: Allocate the costs and benefits of new and existing facilities and services in a balanced and equitable manner so that those who benefit pay a fair share of the costs.

*Policy 1: Fiscal Impact Analysis.* The county should examine the feasibility of establishing a fiscal impact analysis procedure. In order to aid the county in estimating and forecasting its capital and service expenditures, the fiscal impact of each major development proposal should be analyzed.

*Policy 2: Proffer Guidelines.* The county should examine the possibility of establishing guidelines for the proffering of land, facilities, and/or funds to offset a portion of the cost of providing capital facilities to serve a new development. Flexibility should be encouraged in the type and mix of proffers so that the county can work with developers to determine the most appropriate proffer package for a particular project.

*Policy 3: Special Service Districts.* The county should examine the possibility of establishing special service districts to provide the funding for additional public facilities and services for particular areas of the county that desire such additional facilities and services. Such districts should be located in the Urban Service or Community Development Areas designated in the Comprehensive Plan.

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

*Policy 1: Funding Increased Density in Urban Areas.* The county should develop a strategy for ensuring that the infrastructure improvements that permit higher densities in the Urban Service and Community Development Areas are funded by all county residents.

*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: 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 convenient 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: Utilize taxation methods that encourage the preservation of productive agricultural areas while ensuring that the land is fairly and equitably assessed.

*Policy 1: Sliding-Scale Land Use Taxation.* The county should explore the utilization of a voluntary sliding-scale land use taxation program in the agricultural zoning districts.

*Policy 2: Revalidation Schedule.* The county should explore the possibility of changing to a different land use tax revalidation schedule. The county should work to establish the revalidation schedule that is both most efficient for county staff and the most equitable for the county's landowners.

*Policy 3: Open Space.* The county should explore the possibility of restricting enrollment in the land use taxation program to only those properties that are used for productive agricultural and forestry purposes.

## ***G. Historic Resources***

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

Objective A: Continue taking the necessary steps 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: Historic Resources Inventory.* The county should explore updating the existing historic resources inventory.

*Policy 4: Preservation Plan.* The county should explore developing a separate historic preservation plan for its historic resources.

*Policy 5: 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: Purchase of Development Rights Program.* Examine possible ways in which a purchase of development rights program for agricultural land preservation can be linked with the preservation of historic and prehistoric resources.

*Policy 5: Certified Local Government Program.* The county should explore becoming a Certified Local Government as designated by the Virginia Department of Historic Resources.

*Policy 6: Taxation Policies.* The county should examine the development of taxation policies 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 strongly encourage 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 strongly 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.

*Policy 2: Zoning Classifications.* The county should consider implementing zoning classifications that would allow business and residential uses in historic villages to grow moderately in keeping with their existing character.

**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.* 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 as it seeks to study, collect, preserve, publish, educate about, and promote the history of Augusta County and its communities.

## ***H. 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, particularly historic structures in order to increase the opportunities for variety and economy in the housing stock.

*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. Monitor the provision of adequate senior care facilities to accommodate the growing retiree and elderly population.

*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.

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: Housing Plan.* The county should prepare, with public involvement, a housing plan to study the housing needs of the county as well as the feasibility of implementing new local and regional housing programs.

*Policy 2: 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 coordinate its efforts to provide affordable housing with those of the cities and other neighboring localities in order to maximize efficiency and effectiveness. Such cooperative efforts could include housing authorities, specific housing projects, and a range of local, state, or federally funded assistance programs.

*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.

*Policy 4: 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.

*Policy 5: Housing Trust Fund.* Explore the feasibility of establishing a local 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 developer proffers, the county government 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 6: 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 7: Housing Code.* Examine the feasibility of adopting and administering the Virginia Maintenance Code to ensure the upgrading of existing, substandard and unsafe housing.



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.

*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: Limit residential development in the Rural Conservation and Agricultural Conservation Areas.

*Policy 1:* Residential Developments in Rural Conservation Areas. The county should limit residential developments in Rural Conservation Areas to only rural residential developments, permitted residential cluster developments, and individual lots created through the minor subdivision process.

*Policy 2:* Residential Developments in Agricultural Conservation Areas. The county should limit residential developments in the Agricultural Conservation Areas to only individual lot creation through the minor subdivision regulations.

Objective B: Enact measures to separate residential uses from intensive agriculture uses in the Rural Conservation and Agricultural Conservation Areas.

*Policy 1:* Reciprocal Setbacks. Reciprocal setbacks should be implemented for single-family and multi-family housing located in or adjacent to the Rural Conservation or Agricultural Conservation Areas.

## ***I. 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 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.

*Policy 2: Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services.* The county should support the mental health 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 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, adult day care, recreation and education programs, volunteer programs, and library services.

Objective B: Promote 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 food stamps, Medicaid, Family Access to Medical Insurance Security (FAMIS), and other child and adult services.

*Policy 3: Retiree and Elderly Housing.* The county should promote the development of housing to accommodate the growing retiree and elderly population. The county should monitor the provision of adequate senior care facilities to accommodate the growing retiree and elderly population and ensure that they are located in close proximity to the facilities that are needed to serve them.

Objective C: Foster the support of the private sector in meeting local social and 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.

## ***J. 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, while requiring compatibility of land use with adjacent properties and adequate buffers to ensure sensitive transitions between uses and densities.

*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 a minimum of 660 feet between commercial entrances on Thoroughfare Plan road corridors. 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 Planned Unit Developments 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.

*Policy 8: Development North of Waynesboro.* The County and the Service Authority should examine ways in which public water and wastewater services can be extended to the area immediately adjacent to the northern boundary of the City of Waynesboro, north of Route 250 and west of Route 254, in order to serve existing and future residential developments in that area.

*Policy 9: Location of Business Development.* Larger scale, regional, and community businesses and higher intensity business uses should be permitted only in designated 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 designated Urban Service Areas, where the roads, utilities, and other necessary infrastructure are sufficient to support such uses.

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.

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. 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.

F: Community Mixed Use. Areas designated Community Mixed Use may have a density of up to six to twelve dwelling units per net acre. In addition to a variety of residential uses, on up to 40% of the total land area in the neighborhood, there may be retail and office uses and in some, but not all, cases 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: Rezoning Approvals.* Requests for increased 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, available and planned public facilities and the level of facilities proffered by the applicant.

*Policy 4: Role of Cities in Absorbing New Residential Development.* The county should recognize the role of Staunton and Waynesboro in absorbing new residential development in the region.

*Policy 5: Rural Communities.* Encourage any new development in and adjacent to the county's rural communities, as identified by this Plan, 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. Rural communities with public water and/or sewer service will have a designation of Rural Community 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 establishing new zoning districts for use in these communities, particularly for business and residential uses.

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 strongly 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 wherever necessary to provide adequate visual and aural protection between adjacent properties.

Business and industrial developments should be strongly 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 industrial uses should be encouraged in areas designated Planned Residential, Neighborhood Mixed Use, or Community 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, a mixture of business and industrial 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 develop a series of small area plans 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, the appropriate arrangement of land uses, and the inclusion of schools, parks, 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. Such features should be preserved and incorporated into the new development to the maximum practical extent.

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 strongly 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: Development Standards.* The county should require that new residential developments provide adequate on-site facilities to accommodate the needs of the new residents and coordinate those improvements with adjacent sites and with the county. Such facilities may include but not be limited to recreation facilities, land for schools, community centers or other public use sites, adequate stormwater management facilities and adequate roads and parking.

*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, 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 the safety and capacity of the urban road 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.* Calm vehicle traffic within communities and near schools with pedestrian-oriented streetside design. Design strategies such as buildings located at minimum setback distances, on-street parking, and streetscaping amenities such as street trees, benches, and lighting should be encouraged where appropriate.

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 rural residential lots 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.* Examine possible amendments to the subdivision regulations that would assist the county in restricting 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 rezonings to Rural Residential to foster incremental additions to existing settlements.

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 add 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. The county should adopt a policy for the review of proposed easements within a specific distance (i.e. ½ to 1-mile) of significant public facilities such as the Shenandoah Valley Regional Airport or Blue Ridge Community College.

*Policy 3: Purchase of Development Rights.* The county should establish a purchase of development rights (PDR) program to protect farmland, open space, community character, and natural resources within the county. The county should provide a consistent and sufficient level of funding to the PDR program to ensure its success.

*Policy 4: Transfer of Development Rights.* The county should explore the feasibility of establishing a transferable development rights program.

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 settlements, so as to cause minimal disruption of the rural landscape.

*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, with a minimum lot size of one acre. 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: Clustering of Dwellings in the Agricultural Conservation Areas.* In the designated Agricultural Conservation Areas, the county should strongly discourage rural cluster developments as well as conventional residential rezonings and subdivisions.

*Policy 4: Rural Communities.* Encourage any new development in and adjacent to the county's rural communities, as identified by this Plan, 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. The county should explore the feasibility of establishing new zoning districts for use in these communities, particularly for business and residential uses.

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

*Policy 1: Siting of Dwellings.* Encourage 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 home occupation uses should be encouraged 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, views and the horizon, 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 strongly 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. Require new residential developments to provide sufficient buffers from existing adjacent farming operations.

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

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

*Policy 1: Public Roads.* Require all lots in Rural Residential subdivisions to be served by public roads accepted into the VDOT system.

*Policy 2: Road Access.* Discourage direct access to Thoroughfare Plan 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. All residential subdivisions should be discouraged from having a single point of entry onto collector roads.

*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.

**Objective G:** Keep the cost of providing public services to rural areas to a minimum.

*Policy 1: Development Standards.* Require that new residential developments provide adequate on-site facilities to accommodate the needs of the new residents. In rural areas, it is expected that fewer on-site facilities will be needed than in urban areas due to the lower population densities of rural development. However, contributions for off-site facilities will be appropriate to offset a portion of the costs of the facilities that the county will provide to new rural residents.

*Policy 2: 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 3:** Keep the cost of providing public services and facilities to a minimum.

Objective A: 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.

**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.

## ***K. Library***

**Goal 1:** Establish and maintain library facilities and services that provide efficient, effective, and readily available service to all county residents in accordance with state service standards.

Objective A: Provide high-quality library facilities, services, and programs that are efficient, effective, and readily available to serve 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 two library stations in Craigsville and Deerfield.

*Policy 2: Library Facility Improvements.* In the short term, library improvements should be focused on renovating the Main Library and transitioning the Craigsville Station to a new facility while continuing to support the Churchville Library and the Deerfield Station. In the longer term, a branch facility will likely be appropriate in the Verona area. The county should encourage the increased use of technological advances to improve library service delivery.

*Policy 3: Physical Condition.* Make all library facilities clean, safe, attractive, in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, and adaptable to new technologies.

*Policy 4: School Libraries and Public Libraries.* The Library should continue to support the education of public, private, and home-schooled students. The library collections should supplement the materials found in the school libraries and support the curriculum and the Virginia Standards of Learning.

*Policy 5: Coordinate Efforts and Resources.* The library system should continue to cooperate with neighboring jurisdictions in sharing materials, technology, and services. Economies of scale that may be achieved through further sharing or combining of resources should be explored.

*Policy 6: Common Space.* Provide meeting room facilities that are of adequate size and accessible for the wide variety of public activities that are conducted in library facilities.

*Policy 7: Library Planning.* The Augusta County Library Board should continue to conduct its own planning efforts. The Long Range Plan should be updated regularly. A plan for future branches and outreach services should be developed. The library's planning should be considered a part of the county's planning process.

*Policy 8: Changing Demographics.* The library should be prepared to respond to changes in the county's demographic situation, particularly the anticipated growth in both immigrant and elderly populations.

Objective B: The county should seek to achieve state standards for library facilities and services during the course of the next five to ten years, and to maintain those service levels as the population grows.

## ***L. 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, recreation, and other species that co-exist within the county.

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 Shenandoah River, and the Chesapeake Bay.

*Policy 1: Purchase of development rights.* The county should establish a purchase of development rights program to protect farmland, open space, community character, and natural resources within the county. The county should provide a consistent and sufficient level of funding to the PDR program to ensure its success.

*Policy 2: Easements & Land Protection.* Promote other conservation easement and land acquisition programs, as well as a possible transfer of development rights program. 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 3: Tributary Strategy.* Work with the Department of Conservation & Recreation's Shenandoah Valley Office to identify, prioritize, and implement appropriate measures in the Tributary Strategy 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 4: 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 5: Natural Resources GIS.* Maintain a natural resources geographic information system as part of the county's existing GIS capabilities. The purpose of the natural resources GIS would be to keep data updated and 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, source water protection zones from ACSA, 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 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 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 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 flood plain 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 USAs. The county should also pursue public/private partnerships to implement these plans, including proffers to set aside land for and/or construct stormwater facilities and fee-in-lieu contributions (trading off on-site stormwater compliance with contribution to a watershed solution).

Objective B: Develop innovative 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: Modify Stormwater Code.* Modify Chapter 18, Regulation of Stormwater, to allow and encourage Low-Impact Development (LID) and remove obstacles to incorporating LID design, such as disconnecting impervious areas, into development projects. Develop policies and procedures that supplement the Virginia Stormwater Management Handbook that allow for LID credits as a way to provide incentives for implementation.



*Policy 2: 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 3: Maintenance Agreements.* Ensure that recorded maintenance agreements are secured for each project that includes stormwater management facilities.

*Policy 4: 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 5: Stormwater Program Consistent With State & Federal Guidelines.* Develop a stormwater 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.

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 flood plains, 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, PUDs, 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 flood plain (wider of the two); ensure that impervious areas do not short-circuit buffer.	100 feet on either side of stream or limit of flood plain (wider of the two); ensure that impervious areas do not short-circuit buffer.
<b>Flood Plains</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 flood plain</li> <li>Develop small-scale trails</li> <li>Promote reforestation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No development or filling in flood plain</li> <li>Promote reforestation</li> </ul>
<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	No grading, roads, building sites on slopes > 25% and

Natural Resources Feature	Urban Service Area	Community Development Area	Rural Conservation Area	Agricultural Conservation Area
			design	ridgelines
<b>Source Water &amp; Recharge Areas for Public Water Supplies (VA Dept. of Health Zone 1 or more detailed zone identified by ACSA study)</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>
<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 flood plain preservation	Tie in with greenways, active and passive recreation, and flood plain 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, as well as applicable purchase and transfer of development rights 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).* Work with partner agencies, including the Headwaters SWCD and the Natural Resources Conservation Service, to promote agricultural BMPs and nutrient 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.* Work with the U.S. Forest Service to promote the county's interests during revision of the George Washington/Thomas Jefferson National Forest Management Plan.

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

*Policy 1: Land Preservation Outreach.* The county, with assistance from the Director of Agriculture Development, should develop a brochure that outlines the various 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 and the Headwaters SWCD.

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

*Policy 1: Adopt Source Water Protection Overlay.* Support ongoing source water protection efforts, including the source water protection ordinance developed by the Augusta County Service Authority. Assist the ACSA in protecting public water supplies. Supplies in karst areas are of particular importance.

*Policy 2: Groundwater Studies.* Support Augusta County Service Authority efforts to investigate new groundwater sources and pursue geologic investigations to determine areas of influence for springs and wells.

*Policy 3: Contaminant Source Inventory.* Work with the ACSA on a new initiative to develop a GIS-based contaminant source inventory as a growth coordination and early warning tool for existing and proposed development. Features to consider for such an inventory include: items addressed in the Virginia Department of Health's Source Water Assessment Program, leaking underground storage tanks, particular karst

features where groundwater is uniquely vulnerable (e.g., sinkholes), confined animal operations, and other sources that use, store, or dispose of hazardous chemicals.

**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.

*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. These standards can address: (1) the physical separation of wells from on site sewage disposal system drainfields (instead of having them interspersed throughout the development footprint), (2) possible use of open space for drainfields and reserve drainfields, (3) strategic location of wells through geophysical surveys and other means, and (4) allowing centralized utilities only if they are operated and maintained by the Service Authority or a public responsible maintenance entity approved by the county.

*Policy 5: Nonconventional Sewage Disposal Systems.* Continue to adhere to the existing policy on nonconventional sewage disposal systems in Chapter 11 of the County Code.

**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.* 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. 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 and the County Fire & Rescue Department 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: 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 5: 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. Also, ensure that no development takes place below the elevation of the dam.

**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 flood plains, 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: Revise Flood Plain District.* Review and revise the Floodplain Overlay District to disallow habitable structures within the flood plain and to strongly discourage any filling that decreases flood plain capacity. Consider coordination of flood district provisions with the cities of Waynesboro and Staunton.

## ***M. Parks and Recreation***

**Goal 1:** Establish and maintain parks and recreational facilities and services 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.* A major priority for the county’s parks and recreation development strategy is to acquire adequate land on which parks and recreation facilities can be established. Land can be acquired through a variety of mechanisms including public, fee simple purchase, developer proffers, conversion of existing, under used public facility sites and civic group dedications.

*Policy 2: Location of New 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. The following recommendations found in the Augusta County Comprehensive Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan from November 2003, should provide guidance for the location of new parks and recreational facilities.

A: Central Recreational Facility. The county should develop one central recreational facility to provide facilities and programs on a countywide basis. The facility should be located in the Verona area and should accommodate both indoor and outdoor activities including a swimming pool, gymnasium facilities, and a multi-purpose field complex, as well as appropriate support facilities.

B: Major Recreational Facilities. The county should develop new major park facilities in and around the communities of Fishersville, and Churchville and should continue efforts to expand the major park facility being developed in Stuarts Draft. 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 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.



E: Greenways. The county should prepare a Greenways Plan incorporating its existing trails and major parks and recreational areas.

*Policy 3: Proffers.* Encourage developers to provide parks and recreation sites and facilities as integral elements of large residential developments to meet the needs of the additional population that the developments will house as well as residents of the surrounding areas. The county should explore possible ways in which the developers of smaller residential developments can contribute to the parks and recreational needs of the county. Encourage non-residential developments to contribute land and facilities to the neighboring residential community. Such land and improvements should be proffered to the county in coordination with the county's planning policies, CIP, and parks and recreation services standards.

Objective B: 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, with public involvement, the Parks and Recreation Master Plan.

*Policy 3: 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 4: City/County Cooperation.* Formalize agreements for new facilities and programs and enhance communication with the cities of Staunton and Waynesboro.

*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: Volunteer Support.* The county should foster cooperative contributions of volunteer assistance for its 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.

*Policy 7: Shared Facilities.* The county should continue to cooperate with the School Board in coordinating the use of school recreational facilities for the benefit of county citizens at large. The county should encourage the shared use of all public recreation resources in order to maximize efficiency and minimize duplication. Due to the different missions of the two entities, however, the county should explore the further development of its own system of parks and recreational facilities, supplemented by and coordinated with school facilities.

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

*Policy 1: Trail Connections to Parks.* The county, with public involvement, should develop a greenways plan to explore the potential for connecting residential areas to the parks and recreational facilities located in the county.

*Policy 2: 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.

## ***N. 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: Training Programs.* Carry out and expand the training programs for fire and rescue personnel. Explore the feasibility of developing a formalized Officer Candidate School to prepare career and volunteer staff for officer positions.

*Policy 2: Training Facilities.* The county should continue its efforts to develop a regional fire and rescue training facility.

*Policy 3: Volunteers.* Continue to actively encourage the volunteer-based fire and rescue system. Develop further incentives for recruiting, training, and retaining volunteers. Explore methods to maximize the efficiency and capability of the volunteer system. Explore the feasibility of having all volunteer staff trained to the minimum EMT certification.

*Policy 4: 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 5: Fire and Rescue Stations.* Focus capital improvements to fire and rescue facilities on the existing companies and stations. Evaluate, with public involvement, possible locations and staffing arrangements for the development of new fire and rescue facilities at key locations to provide more comprehensive coverage countywide. Potential changes may include relocating Company 10 to the area of Route 11 south of Route 262 in the Jolivue area, adding emergency medical services to the relocated Station 10, and possibilities for partnering with the Shenandoah Valley Regional Airport and Rockingham County for the staffing of a station at the Airport.

*Policy 6: Fire and Rescue Master Plan.* The county should continue to regularly update the Fire and Rescue Master Plan.

*Policy 7: Feasibility of Fire Prevention Code.* Explore the adoption of a fire prevention code, including the cost of administration and enforcement.

*Policy 8: Fire Prevention Division.* The county should examine the possibility of establishing a Fire Prevention Division of the Fire and Rescue Department. Such a division would be responsible for enforcing the fire prevention code and for managing the fire prevention and investigation program.

**Objective B:** Maintain and support the continuation, development, and enhancement of the law enforcement 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: Innovative Detention Efforts.* The county should explore the feasibility of implementing 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.

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 encourage the use of shared services and mutual aid agreements with the neighboring localities in order to enhance service delivery in the county and in applicable areas of the neighboring localities.

*Policy 2: Coordinated Emergency Services Programs.* The county should work with the cities of Staunton and Waynesboro to provide backup Emergency Operations Center coverage. 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 to permit public safety agencies to respond sufficiently to fires.

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

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.

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

## ***O. 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 Thoroughfare Plan roadways and roadways designated for non-residential uses.

*Policy 1: Driveway Spacing.* Minimize conflicts caused by turning vehicles by allowing driveways to be spaced no closer than 660' on arterial roads and 250' on collector roads. Driveways on an arterial or collector street should not be located closer than 230' to an intersection with another street.

*Policy 2: 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. Otherwise, direct access to arterial or collector streets should be shared to serve multiple parcels with cross-access between parcels. Discourage individual access points for single-family homes from Thoroughfare Plan roadways.

*Policy 3: Restricted Access.* Encourage the use of raised medians to restrict turning movements. The spacing between median openings should be no less than 1320' on arterial streets and 660' on collector streets.

Objective B: Apply operational and spot improvements to existing roadways to increase the capacity.

*Policy 1: Identify Bottlenecks or Safety Concerns.* Assess the need for operational and spot improvements through corridor studies, traffic impact studies, and safety studies.

*Policy 2: Improve Intersection Operations.* Where the overall intersection or any movement of a signalized intersection operates at an LOS D or

worse, potential mitigation strategies include re-timing signals, signal synchronization, or lane re-striping. Where the overall intersection or any movement of an unsignalized intersection operates at an LOS D or worse, intersection improvements including signalization, lane re-striping, or constructing a roundabout will be considered.

*Policy 3: 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.

Objective C: Develop 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: Collector Grid Street Spacing.* Encourage the development of a grid of collector streets at a spacing of one-half to one mile apart to serve trips between and within communities.

*Policy 3: Local Grid Street Spacing.* Encourage the development of a grid of local streets at a spacing of 300-600' apart to serve trips within communities and provide a walkable scale of development.

*Policy 4: 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 5: Walkable Communities.* Develop 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.* Discourage corner radii larger than 30' at the intersections of collector streets with other collector streets, local streets, or driveways. Collector street corner radii as small as 25' are encouraged where staff and VDOT agree that a smaller radius is acceptable. Discourage corner radii larger than 25' at the intersections of local streets with other local streets or driveways. 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 use between communities and non-motorized transportation 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 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.

*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 Virginia Safe Routes to School Program to infill pedestrian and cycling infrastructure to improve safety near elementary and middle schools.

*Policy 4: Public Transportation.* Encourage initiatives for public transportation and transit alternatives put forth by private sector or community groups, including public/private partnerships.

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

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: Access Management.* Strictly enforce the access management standards identified in this Plan.

*Policy 3: Local Street Development.* Provide alternate local routes through the development of parallel routes or grid street networks within the interchange area, preserving the capacity of arterial roads for regional traffic.

*Policy 4: Land Development.* Encourage the development of major regional traffic generators within the interchange areas 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: Where network constraints cannot be adequately addressed through operational improvements to existing streets or by creating mixed-use communities with a grid street network, secondary strategies that may be acceptable include adding parallel connectors and widening existing roads.

*Policy 1: Add Parallel Connectors.* Parallel roadway connectors may be constructed to add capacity adjacent to an existing, constrained roadway corridor.

*Policy 2: Widen Existing Roads.* Where roadway segments are operating at an 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 H:** 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 the applicant for any development proposal generating over 100 daily trips. 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: Off-site Mitigation.* Off-site mitigation should be required in cases where traffic impacts from proposed development cause an intersection movement or roadway segment to operate at an LOS D or worse.

*Policy 3: Develop Public Roads.* New roads in the county will generally be public, state-maintained roads. Private roads may be allowed in master-planned communities or planned-unit developments where an acceptable design is proposed for alleyways or other non-standard road sections.

*Policy 4: Right-of-Way Acquisition.* Developers shall provide the right-of-way for, and design and construct, proposed new roadways or roadway widenings indicated in the Thoroughfare Plan, small area plans, corridor plans, or similar adopted plans and studies.

**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 Thoroughfare Plan roads 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 Thoroughfare Plan 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. Wherever possible, gravel or unpaved roads should be kept in their unpaved state, but well maintained.

*Policy 4: Pave in Place Program.* Submit annual recommendations to VDOT for unpaved road improvements that qualify for the Pave in Place Program. These roads do not need to meet secondary road standards.

*Policy 5: New Rural Roads.* Require that public, state-maintained roads be provided to serve land that is rezoned for rural residential development. Permit private access easements only for minor subdivision lots.

*Policy 6: Maintenance of unpaved roads.* The county's 300 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.

*Policy 1: Identify Bottlenecks or Safety Concerns.* Assess the need for operational and spot improvements through corridor studies, traffic impact studies, and safety studies.

*Policy 2: Improve Intersection Operations.* Where any movement of a signalized intersection operates at an LOS D or worse, potential mitigation strategies include re-timing signals and signal synchronization. Where any movement of an unsignalized intersection operates at an LOS D or worse, intersection improvements including signalization or constructing a roundabout will be considered.

*Policy 3: 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.

**Objective C:** Where network constraints cannot be adequately addressed through operational improvements to existing streets, secondary strategies that may be acceptable include adding parallel connectors and widening existing roads.

*Policy 1: Add Parallel Connectors.* Parallel roadway connectors may be constructed to add capacity adjacent to an existing, constrained roadway corridor.

*Policy 2: Widen Existing Roads.* Where roadway segments are operating at an 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 within existing or developing communities.

**Goal 3:** Implement the county's Thoroughfare Plan.

Objective A: Use the Thoroughfare Plan to guide future transportation decisions. The Thoroughfare Plan provides recommendations that address strategies to mitigate projected congested roadway conditions in 2025.

*Policy 1: New Road Construction.* Develop grid road networks and parallel road corridors in Urban Service and Community Development Areas.

*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: 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 4: 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 5: Interstate 81 Improvements.* Coordinate with regional and state agencies to ensure that Interstate 81 Improvements are integrated into development plans for Augusta County. Ensure that plans for Interstate 81 improvements include mitigation strategies to relieve congestion on Route 11 resulting from Interstate 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, 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 and commercial 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 Facility.* Assess the need for an intermodal transfer facility to complement current freight movement by truck, rail, and air.

*Policy 4: Public Transportation.* The county will coordinate with the cities of Staunton and Waynesboro and other local organizations to maximize the potential for long-distance trips to be served by bus.

*Policy 5: Demand-Responsive Transportation.* The county will coordinate with Coordinated Area Transportation Services, Blue Ridge Community College, and the City of Staunton to provide demand-responsive transportation services in the county.

*Policy 6: 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 7: 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.

*Policy 8: 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: 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 VDOT, SAFETEA-LU, and public/private partnerships.

*Policy 2: Revise Countywide Budget Allocations.* The county should revise its current transportation funding allocation system to ensure that each 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. 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.

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

*Policy 1: County Transportation Manager.* Consider hiring a County Transportation Manager to oversee and coordinate all transportation planning activities in the county.

*Policy 2: 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 3: 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 4. 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 Safe Routes to School Program for infrastructure and education funding.

## ***P. 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: Develop water supply sources to meet current and future county demands for a safe source of drinking water.

*Policy 1: Wellhead Protection.* The county should work with the Augusta County Service Authority to develop a program that will protect its existing and future public water supplies.

*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.

*Policy 3: Contaminant Source Inventory.* The county should develop a GIS-based contaminant source inventory as a growth coordination and early warning tool for existing and proposed development.

Objective B: Develop wastewater treatment systems that meet current and future county demands and do not pose long-term public health or environmental threats to the county and its residents.

*Policy 1: Mandatory Maintenance.* The county should consider developing 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.

*Policy 3: Incentives for System Maintenance.* The county should evaluate alternatives for providing incentives to those land owners who properly maintain their private sewage disposal systems.

*Policy 4: Direct Discharge.* The county should prohibit private sewage disposal systems that rely on direct discharge.

**Objective C:** The county should continue its efforts to meet the requirements of the Chesapeake Bay Program as set forth by the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ).

*Policy 1: Wastewater Treatment Plants.* The ACSA should complete the expansion projects at the Fishersville, Weyers Cave, Middle River, and Stuarts Draft Wastewater Treatment Plants prior to 2010. The county should complete any other expansion or renovation projects. The county should take the necessary steps to ensure that the county wastewater treatment plants can achieve permit compliance for the allocated nutrient discharge caps for nitrogen and phosphorous.

**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: Water Supply.* All new development in the county must be provided with water from a well, a spring, or a public water supply.

*Policy 2: First Priority Locations.* Designated Urban Service Areas are the first priority locations for the provision and expansion of public water and sewer facilities.

*Policy 3: Second Priority Locations.* Designated Community Development Areas are generally the second priority locations for the provision and expansion of public water service.

*Policy 4: Extending Public Water and Sewer Service to Community Development Areas.* The county should attempt, wherever possible, to extend public sewer service to those Community Development Areas that have only public water service in order to reduce the number of dwellings

on private sewage disposal systems and to facilitate a more efficient land use pattern. Similarly, the county should attempt to extend public water service to those Community Development Areas, like New Hope, that have only public sewer service.

*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. At such time as public water or sewer service is extended to these areas they should be re-designated Community Development Areas, unless the board decides otherwise.

*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. When a subarea is opened for development through the extension of public water and sewer lines, those lines should be sized with consideration for the reasonable capacity of the land within that subarea, and to ensure that such lines are fully in accord with the land use policies and development densities established in this Plan.

*Policy 7: 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.

When opening a new subarea with utility service, both water and sewer systems should be extended together to the subarea whenever feasible, rather than extending either one of the services separately, except for minor extensions within a Community Development Area that is currently served by only one of the two types of service.

The county will cooperate with the Service Authority in the Authority's preparation of a Master Plan for sewer and water facilities which the Authority will prepare subsequent to the adoption of the Comprehensive Plan.

*Policy 8: Planning Commission Approval.* Major 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 9: Water Tank Elevations.* The county should discourage the location of new development near or above elevations determined by the Service Authority in order to ensure the best possible service for all customers.

**Objective B:** Allocate the costs and benefits of new and existing public sewer and water facilities in a balanced and equitable manner so that those who benefit pay a fair share of the costs.

*Policy 1: Funding.* Funding for the capital and operational costs of providing public water and/or sewer extensions should be funded by the developer or landowner who will benefit from the extension. The county may provide financial assistance in combination with other sources such as state and federal grants or loans, private grants or loans, low interest financing to the affected property owners, or other similar mechanisms aimed at keeping the fiscal impacts on county citizens at large to a minimum.

When a developer or landowner funds a trunk line extension to serve an area, pro-rata reimbursements may be made by adjacent landowners/developers who connect to such extensions at a later time.

*Policy 2: Ownership and Operation.* All new public water and sewer facilities in the county must be owned and operated by the Augusta County Service Authority.

*Policy 3: Mandatory Connections.* In areas where public water and/or sewer facilities are provided, connections of new structures to the system(s) should be mandatory in order to equitably fund the cost of such services. The precise timing and funding of such connections should be based upon the circumstances of the particular utility extension project.

**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 study the current system of solid waste collection sites in order to determine the appropriate number and location of these sites.

*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.* Promote and expand local recycling efforts for residential, business, and industrial users. Coordinate with neighboring localities and regional agencies to pursue the identification and development of expanded local and regional markets for recycled materials. 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 semi-annual collection efforts.

**Goal 4:** Ensure that new and existing development in the county is provided with adequate protection from stormwater and flooding through cost-effective and equitable measures.

**Goal 5:** 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.