

AUGUSTA COUNTY, VIRGINIA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE 2005 - 2025 RECORD OF CONTACT

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Contact: John McGehee, Assistant County Administrator
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Interview Date: June 1, 2005

Recorded By: Matt Noonkester, Kimley-Horn & Associates, Inc. (KHA)

Personal Interview:

Mr. Noonkester conducted an in-person interview with Mr. Coffield and Mr. McGehee to discuss the current efforts of Augusta County for updating their adopted Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Noonkester started the interview by introducing the project, explaining the stakeholder interview process, and discussing the format for the interview. Mr. Coffield and Mr. McGehee collectively provided an overview of their roles in county government and responded to specific discussion questions posed by KHA; formulated prior to the meeting and shared with the interviewees for their preparation. A summary of the interview is organized below under the following subject headings: intragovernmental coordination, key issues, and reference materials.

Intergovernmental Coordination

Mr. Coffield and Mr. McGehee explained their roles in county government and the interaction between county staff and elected officials during the planning and budgetary processes. Generally, the day-to-day duties of the Administrator's Office are supervisory and budgetary in nature and this office does not directly exert significant control over policy or operational decisions made within the county. In fact, several departments or authorities operating within the county do so as elected officials or serve separately elected boards other than the County Board of Supervisors. These departments or authorities include the Virginia Department of Transportation, Augusta County Service Authority, Augusta County Commissioner of Revenue, Augusta County Treasurer, Augusta County Sheriff's Office, Augusta County School System, Central Shenandoah Health District, Shenandoah Valley Social Services, Clerk of the Court, Commonwealth Attorney's Office, and Augusta County Library System. The county's influence over these departments generally occurs at the time of budget approval; although VDOT is limited to prioritizing secondary road projects and selecting revenue sharing projects (50% county funding). Mr. Coffield reported that Augusta County is somewhat unique in that all seats on the County Board of Supervisors are up for re-election in the same given year (four year terms).

Mr. Coffield explained that the existing Comprehensive Plan represents consensus between the public citizenry and elected officials. More importantly, elected officials continue to reference the Comprehensive Plan for decision-making and local citizens remain confident in the vision set forth in the document. Mr. Coffield reports that the Comprehensive Plan has been used to evaluate transportation corridor studies and capital improvement projects since 1994. Consistency with the Comprehensive Plan is also referenced in all staff reports prepared for rezoning and special use permit applications. Members of the Planning

Commission, Board of Zoning Appeals, and Board of Supervisors receive an overview of the Comprehensive Plan every four years as part of their new member orientation and/or on-going training as elected officials. An update to the Comprehensive Plan is required every five years by Virginia Code.

Key Issues

Both interviewees agree that the existing document continues to serve the desired vision for the community; and the consultant's efforts should be "valued added" on top of the existing document; such as refinement to some of the more general concepts in the plan, revisions that give certain sections of the plan more teeth, and a focus on implementation through recommended revisions to county ordinances. They also indicate a strong desire to maintain the concept of a "one page plan" for this Comprehensive Plan Update that depicts the Land Use Policy Map and a summary of key points from the Plan on the reverse side.

The Comprehensive Plan is strongly upheld by county staff and elected officials during the decision-making process. Since the mid 1990s, the number of land use plan amendment applications that accompany rezoning applications has significantly decreased. Mr. Coffield hopes that the recommendations in this Comprehensive Plan Update will be broad enough so that they can be applied consistently over the twenty year planning horizon. He does not want a plan that will need major revision every election cycle.

Mr. McGehee commented that "telling citizens what they can do with their land is not an easy job".

Mr. McGehee commented that the County needs better direction in the Comprehensive Plan as to how land within the service areas should be developed. Mr. McGehee also voiced his preference for the Comprehensive Plan Update to better address the provision of public services and refine the desired growth patterns within the various services areas (i.e. action plans). One solution discussed during the interview was cluster development; this should be further evaluated during development of the Comprehensive Plan Update as it is favored by some members on the Board of Supervisors. A second option would be to create small areas plans subsequent to the Comprehensive Plan Update for more detailed analyses/evaluation towards desired development patterns that adequately served by public facilities. Mr. Coffield considers the existing urban service areas oversized for accommodating anticipated growth in the existing Comprehensive Plan; especially when taking into account land reserved as "potential" service area types.

Mr. McGehee commented that we should not anticipate that every lot created within an urban or community service area would be developed (although in reality this could happen). We must plan for the provision of public facilities and services (i.e. transportation corridors, conservation areas, parks and recreation, schools, etc.) that are required as part of providing "functional" communities. Mr. McGehee is also interested in exploring ways of providing some of the required facilities and services for new development through non-governmental means (i.e. cooperatives, home owner associations, etc.). Mr. Coffield noted that the county historically focuses a lot of attention on the capital side of growth, but we also need to further address the operational side of growth in this update to the Comprehensive Plan/Fiscal Impact Analysis.

Mr. Coffield commented that agriculture land must be protected from encroaching rural development. One crucial question for the Comprehensive Plan Update will be the Board of Supervisors position on rural subdivision vs. urban subdivision of land; currently just as many lots are being created in the agriculture areas as residential areas over the last ten years.

Mr. Coffield commented that we must be careful with cost recovery in the urban service area because existing and new residents are sensitive to rising land costs. If residents think that land is too expensive they will seek more affordable land within the rural areas of the county for homesteading. These rural subdivisions are more difficult to serve than urban subdivisions; especially for schools, utilities, fire, and police service. We must remember that people are moving to Augusta County in part to enjoy the scenic beauty; and living in higher density areas is sometimes counterproductive to their relocation. One exception is the increasing elderly population coming to Augusta County. This is the primary market for multifamily residential development occurring within the county. Both interviewees recognize that more tenured residents living in

the county have a far less demanding perspective of level of service for public facilities and services than newly arriving residents coming from more urban areas. These new residents want the serenity of the rural environment but the services they have grown accustomed to while living in the city.

Mr. McGehee commented that the County is required to go through the same planning approval processes as private citizens for implementing proposed projects. He sometimes gets frustrated with the existing system, and if he is frustrated, he can just imagine how frustrating the system must be for private citizens with less tolerance for the rules and procedures currently in place.

Mr. Coffield noted that citizen participation in the day-to-day activities of government is generally reserved for proposed development that directly affects surrounding neighbors. The county does maintain several volunteer boards that are filled with local residents.

From a regional perspective, Augusta County cooperates with the Cities of Staunton and Waynesboro through public service agreements. Limited coordination between the city and county planning agencies is occurring. The Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission does provide a regional voice for matters within the ten cities and counties of the region as part of its mission area.

Reference Materials

The following information was supplied to Kimley-Horn for further review:

- Governance, Project Status Report, September 24, 2004
- Augusta County, Staunton, and Waynesboro Cooperative Agreements, Last Revised September 29, 2004
- A Model Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) Program for Virginia, Part 1: Suggested Components of Local PDR Programs, June 2004
- County of Augusta, Boards and Commissions

Follow-Up Actions:

Mr. Noonkester will secure a copy of the subdivision regulations from Albemarle and Rockingham Counties to study their system for managing growth in rural areas (as recommended by Mr. Coffield).

AUGUSTA COUNTY, VIRGINIA

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE 2005 - 2025

RECORD OF CONTACT

Contact: Dale Cobb, Director of Community Development
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Interview Date: June 1, 2005

Recorded By: Matt Noonkester, Kimley-Horn & Associates, Inc. (KHA)

Personal Interview:

Mr. Noonkester conducted an in-person interview with Mr. Cobb to discuss the current efforts of Augusta County for updating their adopted Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Noonkester started the interview by introducing the project, explaining the stakeholder interview process, and discussing the format for the interview. Mr. Cobb provided an overview of his responsibilities for the planning process in Augusta County and responded to specific discussion questions posed by KHA; formulated prior to the meeting and shared with the interviewee for his preparation. A summary of the interview is organized below under the following subject headings: intragovernmental coordination, key issues, and reference materials.

Intragovernmental Coordination

Mr. Cobb explained his role within the county and the interaction between county staff and elected officials within the planning process. Mr. Cobb directly supervises the planning, zoning, engineering, GIS, and economic development functions of the Community Development Department. Mr. Cobb explained the importance of the Comprehensive Plan to the community, county staff, and elected officials. It serves as a guide for the long term vision of the county and relied upon by citizens for the predictability of future development patterns. Mr. Cobb noted that citizens, real estate interests, etc. come to the front counter on a daily basis to review the document and discuss specific issues/questions with staff. The Community Development Department refers to compliance with the Comprehensive Plan for all rezoning applications presented to the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors and for all special use permit and variance applications presented to the Board of Zoning Appeals.

Key Issues

Strong support for the Comprehensive Plan started in 1994 with adoption of the existing document. It is highly supported by the Board of Zoning Appeals, Planning Commission, and Board of Supervisors in their decision-making roles. Nearly 100% of all rezoning applications follow the Land Use Policies within the Comprehensive Plan; although there are rare cases when a land use plan amendment application is considered concurrent with a rezoning application. Mr. Cobb noted that the real “teeth” of the Comprehensive Plan are in the commitment of the various decision-making bodies to uphold it. Recent Board of Supervisor elections reflect the strong commitment to protecting the Comprehensive Plan as the growth management tool for the county.

Mr. Cobb explained that development patterns within the county are generally consistent with the policy area framework defined in the existing Comprehensive Plan and that this concept is serving the county well. Some developing areas within the county should be examined for the appropriateness of the current policies associated with the four service area types (i.e. urban service, community development, rural conservation, and agricultural conservation) and perhaps a fifth service area type would be appropriate for addressing some

of the “unique” development conditions found in places like Greenville and other small communities. Likewise, the consultant team should consider the historic context and local character of places like Mount Sidney, Mount Solon, Middlebrook, etc. and determine whether additional controls (i.e. overlay districts, service area policies, zoning provisions, etc.) are appropriate. Gateway corridors should also be emphasized in the Comprehensive Plan Update to include controls for signage, architecture, access management, etc. along highway corridors that would protect the natural/rural character of Augusta County. Mr. Cobb noted that the wide distribution of population within the county necessitates certain branch public service for fire, police, parks and recreation, library, etc.

Economic development opportunities are currently offered in the Mill Place Commerce Park (publicly owned) and five or six other privately owned industrial parks throughout the county. Mr. Cobb noted that this is not enough land for the long term vision of the community and he would consider land around the regional airport for potential industrial sites. The agricultural and rural conservation areas need more teeth to protect agricultural activity and the conflicts between agriculture and residential uses should be re-examined. The Chesapeake Bay water quality standards forthcoming from the Commonwealth of Virginia will have a significant impact on septic systems and agricultural activity within the county.

Protection of agricultural land use is an important issue for Augusta County. An Agricultural Task Force is currently looking at tools and strategies for preserving agriculture and their recommendations could lead to subsequent amendments to the Zoning Ordinance. Many residents are concerned with development occurring in agricultural areas and they would like to implement policies in the Comprehensive Plan Update that manage conversion of these lands to non-agriculture uses consistent with the intent of the “Agricultural Conservation Area”. Currently, Mr. Cobb estimates that approximately 450 homes are built in Augusta County each year; and 50% of these are built in agricultural districts. Recommended tools for consideration by the consultant team include 1) stronger buffers between agricultural and residential land uses, 2) the potential for cluster development and other smart growth solutions, 3) require “Nutrient Management Plans” for active agricultural properties, and 4) stronger incentives for private land owners to voluntarily designate their land as part of an Agricultural/Forestral District.

Mr. Cobb discussed opportunities for access management and the marriage between transportation and land use for future policies governing development. He explained that VDOT and Augusta County would need to resolve certain philosophical issues (i.e. driveway locations, intersection alignment, etc.) as part of efforts to implement access management. However, a partnership between VDOT and Augusta County is very important to show developers that they are speaking with one voice for implementing desirable development patterns.

County staff has been busy implementing many of the recommendations from the 1994 – 2014 Comprehensive Plan. Each week, staff responsible for planning, zoning, engineering, and legal functions of the county meet to discuss amendments/revisions to existing ordinances for implementing the Comprehensive Plan and ensuring that the rules and regulations of the county are fair and realistic. The standing policy for county staff and elected officials is to focus on text amendments to the Zoning Ordinance rather than map amendments to the Zoning Map. Map amendments are considered only at the time of petition by a land owner. This is because proffers are made at the time of rezoning in the Commonwealth of Virginia and the county wants to ensure that development pays its fair share for new impacts to the surrounding infrastructure.

Mr. Cobb noted that “enhanced” tools in the Comprehensive Plan, and subsequent implementing documents, are needed for protecting agriculture uses and managing the conversion of agriculture land to residential uses, protecting the natural beauty and environmental resources of Augusta County, and having new development pay its fair share for impacts to the surrounding community.

Reference Materials

The following information was supplied to Kimley-Horn for further review:

- Augusta County Code of Ordinances, Chapter 9: Erosion and Sediment Control
- Augusta County Code of Ordinances, Chapter 18: Regulation of Stormwater
- Augusta County Code of Ordinances, Chapter 21: Subdivision (via website)
- Augusta County Code of Ordinances, Chapter 25: Zoning (via website)
- Agricultural Task Force, Meeting Minutes, February 2005 – May 2005
- Agricultural Task Force, Brainstorming Session Notes, March 3, 2005
- Summary of Development within Agriculture Land Use, 1995 – 2004, presented to Agricultural Task Force on June 2, 2005

Follow-Up Actions:

Mr. Noonkester will download the County Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Ordinance from the Community Development website for review.

Mr. Noonkester will attend the Agricultural Task Force meeting scheduled for June 2, 2005 to observe community issues for preserving agricultural lands and the presentation/ranking of strategies and tools for further consideration.

Mr. Noonkester will follow-up with Mr. Cobb to determine the most appropriate vehicle for transmitting non-residential square footages to the consultant team. The County Zoning Map is now available in GIS.

Mr. Noonkester will contact the Zoning Administrator (John Wilkinson) to obtain a list of needs for amending the existing Zoning Ordinance.

AUGUSTA COUNTY, VIRGINIA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE 2005 - 2025 RECORD OF CONTACT

Contact: Steve Rosenberg, County Attorney
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Interview Date: June 1, 2005

Recorded By: Matt Noonkester, Kimley-Horn & Associates, Inc. (KHA)

Personal Interview:

Mr. Noonkester conducted an in-person interview with Mr. Rosenberg to discuss the current efforts of Augusta County for updating their adopted Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Noonkester started the interview by introducing the project, explaining the stakeholder interview process, and discussing the format for the interview. Mr. Rosenberg provided an overview of his role and responsibilities in the planning process for Augusta County and responded to specific discussion questions posed by KHA, formulated prior to the meeting and shared with the interviewee for his preparation. A summary of the interview is organized below under the following subject headings: intragovernmental coordination, key issues, and reference materials.

Intragovernmental Coordination

Mr. Rosenberg explained his role as the County Attorney and the interaction between county staff and elected officials within the planning process. Mr. Rosenberg directly serves the County Board of Supervisors and Board of Zoning Appeals at their regularly scheduled meetings, but he has no direct involvement with the Planning Commission. Mr. Rosenberg is also very involved with county staff developing and/or revising policies, including ordinance development, and attends weekly coordination meetings for addressing these issues. Routine planning assistance typically includes stormwater legal agreements, deeds of dedication associated with new subdivisions and easements, subdivision agreements, incentive agreements and property sales related to economic development, proffered conditions, interpretations of the local zoning ordinance, and code enforcement issues.

Key Issues

Mr. Rosenberg is working with county staff to create a new policy outside of the existing Comprehensive Plan that sets forth the rules and requirements for amending the plan. Currently, the policy states that amendments to the Comprehensive Plan should be reviewed on an annual cycle; however, proposed land use plan amendments are routinely being processed concurrently with rezoning applications.

Historical records show that two recent actions by the County Board of Supervisors and one action by the Board of Zoning Appeals have resulted in litigation. In all three cases, inconsistencies between the County's actions and the Comprehensive Plan were cited by the plaintiff as reasons to overturn the decision. None of these arguments against the Comprehensive Plan was ultimately considered by the courts, as each case was determined in favor of the county on procedural grounds.

Mr. Rosenberg also discussed some of the limitations and/or constraints of the Virginia Code that have caused litigation problems for the County in the past, specifically related to provisions in the Subdivision Ordinance, and reiterated that recommendations for updating the Comprehensive Plan must be specifically enabled via state law (i.e. Dillon's Rule).

Reference Materials

No information was requested from the County Attorney's Office at this time.

Follow-Up Actions:

Mr. Rosenberg provided a supplemental response (via e-mail) for other tools that may be available under the Code of Virginia for offsetting the impacts of new development on surrounding infrastructure. According to Mr. Rosenberg, under Virginia law, very few localities have authority to impose impact fees. Augusta County fits into none of the classifications found in the enabling statute, and therefore does not have the authority to impose impact fees. The county does have authority to require contributions by developers toward the costs of "reasonable and necessary sewerage, water, and drainage facilities, located outside the property limits of the land owned or controlled by the subdivider or developer but necessitated or required, at least in part, by the construction or improvement of the subdivision or development[.]"

Mr. Rosenberg also provided further clarification concerning the timeframe within which cash proffers must be expended by the county. It had been the case that the county need only "provide for the disposition of the property or cash payment in the event the property or cash payment is not used for the purpose for which proffered." However, given amendments to Virginia Code effective July 1, 2005, the county must commence projects for which cash was proffered, or an alternative project designated in accordance with a specific procedure, within seven years of receipt of the cash payment. If the county fails to meet this deadline, proffered cash payments must be forwarded by the county to the Commonwealth Transportation Board.

AUGUSTA COUNTY, VIRGINIA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE 2005 - 2025 RECORD OF CONTACT

Contact: Bruce Crow, Fire-Rescue Chief & Emergency Services Coordinator
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Interview Date: June 2, 2005

Recorded By: Matt Noonkester, Kimley-Horn & Associates, Inc. (KHA)

Personal Interview:

Mr. Noonkester conducted an in-person interview with Chief Crow to discuss the current efforts of Augusta County for updating their adopted Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Noonkester started the interview by introducing the project, explaining the stakeholder interview process, and discussing the format for the interview. Chief Crow provided an overview of his role and responsibilities as the County's Fire-Rescue Chief and responded to specific discussion questions posed by KHA; formulated prior to the meeting and shared with the interviewee for his preparation. A summary of the interview is organized below under the following subject headings: intragovernmental coordination, key issues, and reference materials.

Intragovernmental Coordination

Chief Crow explained his role within the county and the interactions between county staff and the various volunteer fire departments. Augusta County provides fire and emergency medical services from nineteen fire companies and nine rescue squads. Some of these companies are in neighboring jurisdictions serving primary response under "shared service agreements". The county also has a shared services agreement with the City of Staunton for provision of fire-rescue service. Chief Crow participates in the review of proposed rezoning applications and master site plans; however, his participation started only about one year ago. He is aware of the existing Comprehensive Plan although he does not routinely reference the document in his normal responsibilities.

Key Issues

The impacts of development and the large size of Augusta County (i.e. land area) pose several challenges to county fire-rescue services. The county continues to rely on a volunteer system for providing these services. Chief Crow explained that the most important aspect of maintaining a strong volunteer system is the understanding that their time is at a premium and it is becoming more and more difficult for volunteers to provide significant amounts of time among competing interests. Time commitments are compounded for volunteers through fund-raising (full-time) efforts and training. Chief Crow reported that approximately 130 hours of fire training and 130 hours of rescue training are required before taking an active role in responding to calls. If fundraising was removed from the equation, Chief Crow feels that substantial amounts of time could be given back to the volunteers and this could increase the volunteer rosters serving the various stations. One solution for lowering the burden on volunteer fundraising efforts is county funding for basic necessities; however, Chief Crow voiced that most volunteers want to keep their independence so county funding assistance is good, but county ownership is not.

The large size of Augusta County and concentrations of development in some urbanized areas have forced the fire-rescue department to remain innovative for maintaining adequate services. Generally, Augusta County is fire service rich and rescue service poor in their station locations. Equipment is adequate in most

stations as a function of the county's interest free loan matching program. One concern is Company 10 near Staunton; whereby rising traffic congestion and limited street width causes problems for delivering fire service. Chief Crow would like to consider moving this career station to somewhere else central to the county. The area of Riverheads/Greenville should be a focus for future station expansion and the Weyers Cave area is adequately served today but population growth will necessitate the need for rescue service sometime in the near future. One solution for this area is a shared service agreement with Rockingham County and the new regional airport to provide enhanced fire service and new rescue service to Augusta County. Chief Crow would also like to focus on decreasing response time for the surrounding rural communities. This could be accommodated by providing more station locations in the hinterlands.

Infrastructure deficiencies in the surrounding communities directly affect the provision of fire-rescue service. Heavy traffic flow becomes a significant impedance to delivering fire service; especially in more urban areas. Narrow, gravel roads are inherently dangerous for fire service delivery in more rural areas because they negatively impact handling, stopping distance, and travel speed for responding vehicles. Some older bridges in the county (i.e. trussell systems) are too dangerous for fire trucks (width and weight issues) and so the closest station is not able to respond. Dry hydrants and inadequate water storage tanks provide inadequate fire suppression infrastructure for some properties within the county. In some instances, the physical characteristics of development, such as sprawling expansion, lack of fire flow infrastructure, topography, and cost of improvements, make recommended building improvements, such as sprinklers and firewalls, more realistic and economical for addressing fire concerns.

Chief Crow also voiced a need to identify more non-traditional tools for cost recovery to operate the fire-rescue services. Potential funding tools identified during the interview include special taxing districts, proffering, impact fees, and land dedication through the subdivision process. As part of any special taxing district, the volunteer departments would require provisions that the funds be provided only for public safety and in approved allocation ratios to support the system. This is because additional taxes are anticipated to hurt fundraising efforts.

Continued development in some locations of the county is also moving fire-rescue officials to consider implementing more "career" staffed stations to maintain adequate level of service. The Board of Supervisor's position on career staffed stations is that they will only provide them when formally requested by the volunteer department. Chief Crow expressed that the career system is meant to augment the existing volunteer system; not replace it. Development pressures in the most urbanized areas of the county combined with scheduling conflicts/available time constraints for volunteers makes these areas the most likely to consider some level of career staffing.

Reference Materials

The following information was supplied to Kimley-Horn for further review:

- Fire-Rescue Emergency Services Regional Master Plan (April 4, 2000)
- Augusta County Fire-Rescue Emergency Services Master Plan, Updates & Actions

Follow-Up Actions:

Chief Crow is interested in lending his assistance for development of the Comprehensive Plan Update; especially sections pertaining to public safety and responsible development (i.e. mitigating fair share impacts).

AUGUSTA COUNTY, VIRGINIA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE 2005 - 2025 RECORD OF CONTACT

Contact: Jean Shrewsbury, Commissioner of Revenue
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Contact: Richard Homes, County Treasurer
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Contact: Joe Davis, Director of Finance
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Interview Date: May 31, 2005

Recorded By: Matt Noonkester, Kimley-Horn & Associates, Inc. (KHA)

Personal Interview:

Mr. Noonkester conducted an in-person interview with Ms. Shrewsbury, Mr. Homes, and Mr. Davis to discuss the current efforts of Augusta County for updating their adopted Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Noonkester started the interview by introducing the project, explaining the stakeholder interview process, and discussing the format for the interview. Ms. Shrewsbury, Mr. Homes, and Mr. Davis collectively provided an overview of their roles in county government and responded to specific discussion questions posed by KHA; formulated prior to the meeting and shared with the interviewees for their preparation. A summary of the interview is organized below under the following subject headings: intragovernmental coordination, key issues, and reference materials.

Intragovernmental Coordination

Ms. Shrewsbury, Mr. Homes, and Mr. Davis explained their roles in county government. Ms. Shrewsbury is responsible for the assessment of all taxes in the county; including assessment of personal property, determination of eligibility for personal property tax relief, and assessment of real estate. Mr. Homes oversees the collection of revenues generated by all county departments, disbursement of funds, and investment interests for the county. Mr. Davis documents all expenditures by the county. All three interviewees reported that they are aware of the existing Comprehensive Plan; although their offices do not routinely reference the document in their normal responsibilities. Ms. Shrewsbury reported that she is sometimes asked to quantify fiscal impacts (i.e. real estate tax, personal property, etc.) for potential businesses associated with rezoning applications to become part of the decision-making process by the Board of Supervisors.

Key Issues

Augusta County is currently within a cycle of unprecedented overall growth for land values that is expected to continue for the next several years. Since the last reassessment, the overall assessed value of land within the county has increased by nearly 30%, holding the current real estate tax rate constant, and this net growth provides a significant portion of the funds needed for additional public facilities and services. Generally, the interviewees reported that land values in the eastern portion of the county (i.e. east of Interstate 81) outpace land values in the western portion of the county. In addition, land values for undeveloped properties are increasing at a faster rate than improved properties (by nearly 3-4 times for residential land uses). In the current budget, real estate taxes provide approximately 25% of the total budget for planned expenditures.

Ms. Shrewsbury also explained the requirements and financial impacts of the elderly and disabled tax credit and the agriculture tax credit on real estate tax revenues. Overall, the impact of the elderly and disabled tax credit is approximately \$200,000 of lost revenue per year. The agriculture tax credit has a far greater impact on lost real estate tax revenue for the county each year. Ms. Shrewsbury estimates that 70% of the taxable land within the county is registered for the agriculture tax credit and these combined properties produce approximately \$390,000 per year in *total* real estate tax revenues for future county expenditures. However, there is a provision in the tax code that allows the county to recoup a portion of lost revenue for a “five year roll back period” at the time agriculture land is converted to any other land use category. Ms. Shrewsbury estimates that this provision will have a tremendous impact on upcoming land use plan amendments because of the unprecedented growth in land values reported for the 2005 real estate tax reassessment.

Mr. Davis reported that the County Board of Supervisors has historically earmarked 50% of annual growth revenues for the School District; leaving the remaining 50% of growth revenues for all other public facilities and services. In addition, the county adheres to a “pay-as-you-go” system for balancing annual revenues and expenditures. The only exception is new school construction, which is partially funded through borrowed monies. Ms. Shrewsbury also noted that \$500,000 has been earmarked from growth funds this year as seed money for a potential “purchase of development rights” program being studied by an active Land Use Review Committee (i.e., Agriculture Task Force). Mr. Homes noted that the general public has little appreciation for the actual cost of most improvements (citing an example of erecting a traffic signal at \$130,000) and this misunderstanding often causes some frustration for the public when accepting why certain projects are not included in the proposed budget. Ms. Shrewsbury, Mr. Homes, and Mr. Davis would like to see new development pay a greater fair share for offsetting generated impacts (especially for schools) and remind county departments to be more fiscally-minded in advocating for their positions. All three interviewees thought special taxing districts created to fund special, community requested improvements would be hard to manage.

Ms. Shrewsbury, Mr. Homes, and Mr. Davis reported that they are not involved in prioritizing long term capital projects. They collectively agree that the Comprehensive Plan generally has little effect on annual capital improvement projects because there are so many needs (i.e. capital and operating) and not enough funding to go around. Ms. Shrewsbury voiced concern that it is difficult to control the schedule of development in areas identified for growth and that these demands could have a significant impact on funding/prioritizing of capital improvement projects. Mr. Davis suggested limiting areas of development within the county; however, Ms. Shrewsbury raised concerns over even faster land value escalation and Mr. Homes felt these areas would require even more public facilities and services associated with more intense development patterns. Mr. Davis thought a better connection between the Comprehensive Plan and Capital Improvements Plan could be made if land use plan amendments were handled separately from rezoning applications to allow sufficient time to study the impacts to public facilities and services associated with the land use plan amendment; especially for the long term planning horizon.

Reference Materials

The following information was supplied to Kimley-Horn for further review:

- County of Augusta, Virginia 2005-2006 Budget

- County of Augusta, Virginia Capital Improvements Plan, Fiscal Years 2006-2010
- County of Augusta, Virginia Comprehensive Annual Financial Report for the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 2004

Follow-Up Actions:

Ms. Shrewsbury committed to forwarding a copy of the most current statistics for tax relief and land use assessments, an agriculture tax break summary sheet, findings from the 2005 reassessment process, and average assessed values for new construction reported in 2004 for review by Kimley-Horn. The most recent reassessment report and average assessed value information will not be ready until sometime after June 30, 2005, and will be forwarded to the consultant at that time.

AUGUSTA COUNTY, VIRGINIA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE 2005 - 2025 RECORD OF CONTACT

Contact: Ron Sites, Director of Parks and Recreation Department
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Contact: Kathy Stout, Assistant Director of Parks and Recreation Department
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Interview Date: June 2, 2005

Recorded By: Matt Noonkester, Kimley-Horn & Associates, Inc. (KHA)

Personal Interview:

Mr. Noonkester conducted an in-person interview with Mr. Sites and Ms. Stout to discuss the current efforts of Augusta County for updating their adopted Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Noonkester started the interview by introducing the project, explaining the stakeholder interview process, and discussing the format for the interview. Mr. Sites and Ms. Stout collectively provided an overview of their roles in county government and responded to specific discussion questions posed by KHA; formulated prior to the meeting and shared with the interviewees for their preparation. A summary of the interview is organized below under the following subject headings: intragovernmental coordination, key issues, and reference materials.

Intragovernmental Coordination

Mr. Sites and Ms. Stout explained their roles within the county and the interactions between county staff within the planning process. Mr. Sites explained that the mission of the Parks and Recreation Department is to provide “the county with comprehensive programs/facilities that meet the recreation and leisure wants and needs of the community”. The success of the department is customer driven, and the department encourages working in partnership with other private and non-profit agencies to meet the community’s needs. The County Parks and Recreation Department currently offers over 500 different classes and/or programs to various age groups and enjoys a 70-75% percent average fill rate for these services. As a self-assessment, Mr. Sites and Ms. Stout concur that the department is strong in providing programs to children and adults and needs to diversify senior programs and increase the level of service for teens and young adults. Mr. Sites serves on the design review committee for site plan applications and was involved in developing the current Comprehensive Plan in 1994.

Key Issues

The county’s most pressing needs for park and recreation facilities include gymnasiums/recreation centers, trails, swimming facilities, athletic fields, and open space. The county currently shares gymnasium facilities with the school system, but yields scheduling priority to school activities. Ms. Stout reported that school sporting activities are so frequent between the months of December and February that the Parks and Recreation Department effectively has no access to gymnasiums. Both interviewees speculate that a new gymnasium facility and a new recreation center serving the needs of the Parks and Recreation Department in the most urbanized area (i.e. Verona, Fishersville, and Stuarts Draft) would be used by local residents. Mr.

Sites would also like to see an emphasis on developing a trail system for recreational walking and/or bicycling and additional athletic fields.

Mr. Sites further explained the interrelationship between the school system and the Parks and Recreation Department for providing gym space in an efficient manner. Ms. Stout mentioned that sustained high usage and self-imposed pressures to grow the county department for meeting customer demands has created a somewhat territorial relationship between the two parties. Mr. Sites would like to see additional monies added to new school construction projects for attaching recreation centers/gymnasiums and, where appropriate, consider providing additional indoor space for priority use by the Parks and Recreation Department. Mr. Sites also suggested working with the Cities of Staunton and Waynesboro for meeting short-term demand; currently no formal agreements are in place. The county does not charge a “non-resident” fee for city residents to use their facilities; although both cities do charge such a fee to county residents.

According to Mr. Sites and Ms Stout, citizens are increasingly looking to government for providing enhanced leisure services in certain areas of the county as some civic groups are folding their activity centers and asking the Parks and Recreation Department to take over their programs.

The Parks and Recreation Department is implementing improvements to park and recreation facilities in conformance with the recently completed Comprehensive Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan. Included in these recommendations are four new major park facilities identified to take county residents to an all new level of service related to park and recreation opportunities. These regional centers will be located in Churchville, Verona, Fishersville, and Stuarts Draft. Another priority is to connect schools and recreational facilities within the county using some sort of enhanced corridor system; potentially using a greenway system with shared use paths for pedestrians and bicycles.

Mr. Sites also voiced a need to identify non-traditional tools for funding future land acquisition, building construction, and operating expenses. Potential tools identified during the interview include tax levies, in-kind contributions, grant programs, proffering, land dedication through the subdivision process, and other private monies.

Reference Materials

The following information was supplied to Kimley-Horn for further review:

- Augusta County Comprehensive Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan, 2003
- Augusta County Parks and Recreation, Summer 2005 Schedule of Activities
- Augusta County Parks and Recreation Annual Report, 2003
- Augusta County Parks and Recreation Annual Report, 2004

Follow-Up Actions:

Mr. Sites and Ms. Stout are very interested in lending their assistance for development of the Comprehensive Plan Update; especially sections pertaining to parks and recreation funding opportunities and corridor connections between destinations.

AUGUSTA COUNTY, VIRGINIA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE 2005 - 2025 RECORD OF CONTACT

Contact: Gary D. McQuain, Division Superintendent
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Interview Date: May 31, 2005

Recorded By: Matt Noonkester, Kimley-Horn & Associates, Inc. (KHA)

Personal Interview:

Mr. Noonkester conducted an in-person interview with Dr. McQuain to discuss the current efforts of Augusta County for updating their adopted Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Noonkester started the interview by introducing the project, explaining the stakeholder interview process, and discussing the format for the interview. Dr. McQuain provided an overview of the County's school system and responded to specific discussion questions posed by KHA; formulated prior to the meeting and shared with the interviewee for his preparation. A summary of the interview is organized below under the following subject headings: intragovernmental coordination, key issues, and reference materials.

Intragovernmental Coordination

Dr. McQuain explained his role within the county school system and the interaction between county staff and elected officials during the planning and budgetary processes. Dr. McQuain regularly meets with members of the Board of Supervisors and the County Administrator to discuss long range planning needs and budgetary processes. He also coordinates with the Community Development Department on future growth patterns and student population projections for the county to determine impacts on the school system. Dr. McQuain works with the County's Building Inspections Department and Parks and Recreation Department concerning existing school property, new construction, and sharing of recreational fields and facilities.

Representatives for the school system were directly involved in developing the existing 1994 – 2014 Comprehensive Plan. Each year, school officials and Ms. Becky Earhart (Community Development Department) review active tax maps and track newly approved residential developments to anticipate school needs; this exercise forms the basis for subsequent potential school district boundary adjustments. The school system does not incorporate generation rates into their forecast models; although county staff does rely on a set of generation rates for their planning purposes. Historical enrollment figures do not support these rates and the school system has been explicitly directed not to rely upon them for their planning purposes.

Key Issues

Augusta County has significantly invested in its school system since the early 1990s and it is now one of the real assets in the community. Rapid population growth is generally concentrated in the eastern portions of the county (i.e. east of Interstate 81) in conformance with recommendations from the existing Comprehensive Plan. This places continuing pressure on the school system to expand facilities in these urban centers to maintain adequate capacity; including Verona, Fishersville, and Stuarts Draft. Surplus school capacity sufficient to alleviate a portion of these demands does exist in the western portions of the county; however, it is agreed by county staff and elected officials that transporting students between these schools and population centers is too expensive and time consuming to be a viable option. A fourth middle school

(scheduled to open in August 2006) and renovations to two existing high schools are planned to draw down deficiencies in the eastern portion of the county.

Existing policies supported by the County Board of Supervisors and the School Board favor a general no growth position towards school enrollments – basically “moving kids forward”. In April 2005, the actual enrollment for the school system was 10,909 students compared to a projected enrollment of 10,797 students. Dr. McQuain speculates that the slight increase in population represents migration into the county; primarily from places like Charlottesville, Nelson County, and Albemarle County where residents are seeking affordable homes, lower tax rates, and a good school system. Currently, he generally receives one call per week from these residents inquiring about the school system in Augusta County. Dr. McQuain also feels that the overall number of students enrolled in private institutions is declining based on observed staff reductions.

The school system relies on growth revenues for operating expenses between reassessment years. Dr. McQuain reported that the County Board of Supervisors typically earmarks 50% of annual growth revenues for School District expenditures. In reassessment years, a portion of the growth revenues is also used for funding capital costs. The operating costs for the school system are generally funded through state (55%), county (35%), federal (7%), and other (3%) monies.

The Cities of Staunton and Waynesboro operate independent school systems; however, the three school systems do jointly operate a regional technical center (i.e. vocational studies), a Governor’s School for the arts and humanities, and a Governor’s School for math, science, and technology. One of Dr. McQuain’s goals for future programming and facility improvements is to ensure that the local workforce is adequately prepared for the type of industries that the county is seeking to capture.

Dr. McQuain reports that the school system works in full cooperation with the County Parks and Recreation Department to provide shared facilities enjoyed by students and the community as a whole. In addition, local civic associations are allowed to use school facilities for a small personnel charge. Private, for-profit interests are only allowed to use the facilities free of charge when over 50% of the participants reside in Augusta County. During the 2004 – 2005 school year, the school system supported 1,070 events on school property; primarily for the County Parks and Recreation Department.

Reference Materials

Dr. McQuain provided Kimley-Horn with the following information at the time of the interview:

- School Board Work Session, Capital Projects (April 22, 2004)
- Augusta County Schools, Record of Building Use, 2004 - 2005 School Year
- Student Population Changes, 2000 - 2004

Follow-Up Actions:

Dr. McQuain committed to forwarding a copy of the School Census Report to Mr. Noonkester (electronic copy) once it is completed and presented to the County Board of Supervisors. The report is anticipated to be available after August 15, 2005.

AUGUSTA COUNTY, VIRGINIA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE 2005 - 2025 RECORD OF CONTACT

Contact: Kenny Lee Robinson, Verona Residency Administrator
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Contact: John Shy, Engineering Technician III
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Contact: Terry Short, District Assistant Planner
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Interview Date: May 31, 2005

Recorded By: Matt Noonkester & David Whyte, Kimley-Horn & Associates, Inc. (KHA)

Personal Interview:

Mr. Noonkester and Mr. Whyte conducted an in-person interview with Mr. Robinson, Mr. Shy, and Mr. Short to discuss the current efforts of Augusta County for updating their adopted Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Noonkester started the interview by introducing the project, explaining the stakeholder interview process, and discussing the format for the interview. Mr. Robinson, Mr. Shy, and Mr. Short collectively provided an overview of the state transportation planning process and responded to specific discussion questions posed by KHA; formulated prior to the meeting and shared with the interviewees for their preparation. A summary of the interview is organized below under the following subject headings: intergovernmental coordination, key issues, and reference materials.

Intergovernmental Coordination

Mr. Robinson and Mr. Shy explained their roles within VDOT and their interaction with representatives for Augusta County. Mr. Robinson attends regularly scheduled BOS Agenda Briefings (i.e. monthly), participates in “ride along” evaluations of transportation corridors with individual County Supervisors in their home districts, and closely coordinates with the County Administrator on items of interest. He also represents VDOT for coordination with the County on matters relating to the Six Year Primary and Secondary Roadway Plans. Mr. Shy works with the VDOT Land Development review team that reviews residential and non-residential development applications for transportation compliance. His primary contact during these reviews is with Dale Cobb and Becky Earhart in the County Community Development Department. Neither Mr. Robinson nor Mr. Shy reported reliance on the currently adopted Comprehensive Plan for completing their reports or reviews related to transportation within the County. VDOT currently does not have a copy of the Augusta County Comprehensive Plan for reference in their offices.

Key Issues

Overall, VDOT is generally satisfied with the vehicular mobility and accessibility options provided within the existing transportation system. Major north/south transportation corridors include 42, 11, I-81, and 340, and 252. Major east/west transportation corridors include I-64, 250, 254, and 256. VDOT stated that the pavement conditions of roadways within the County are generally good and that roadways have left turn lanes provided where necessary. Mr. Robinson, Mr. Shy, and Mr. Short identified the following transportation corridors as “growth centers”:

- I-64 in the vicinity of Exit 91
- Vicinity of Route 608 and Route 285
- I-64 in the vicinity of Exit 94
- I-81 in the vicinity of Exit 235
- Route 250 in Fishersville and generally between Waynesboro and Staunton
- Route 640 between Route 250 and Route 285

When asked to speculate on the most congested or busiest corridors in the county, Routes 640, 636, 250, and 285 were identified. Separately identified, I-81 and I-64 were cited as experiencing at least one to two incidents per day and having accompanying lane closures as a result of incidents. Mr. Robinson noted that most incidents are cleared within an hour; however, some required additional time to attend to. Fog was noted as a probable cause of incidents on I-64. The volume and percentage of truck traffic on I-81 was noted as a concern/issue throughout the I-81 corridor.

Mr. Short speculated that the urbanized areas within Augusta County would become a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) in the next 5 years, potentially coinciding with the 2010 Census. There is currently not a regional travel demand model for Augusta County and vicinity and long range transportation projects for District 8 are developed in the Statewide Transportation Plan and the Six Year Primary and Secondary Roadway Programs.

Historically, VDOT has partnered with county staff to satisfy three transportation priorities held within Augusta County – the Rural Rustic Road Program, development/funding of the Six Year Primary and Secondary Roadway Programs, and site plan review/transportation proffers. The Rural Rustic Road Program provides a mechanism for paving roadways within the county meeting a specific set of criteria. Generally, criteria include the road carrying a relatively low traffic volume (50 – 500 vehicles per day), requiring no additional right-of-way (18-foot pavement plus shoulders), and maintaining existing development intensities along the corridor. Mr. Robinson reported that Augusta County was the first participant in the Rural Rustic Road Program for the Commonwealth of Virginia and has provided funding in addition to that provided by VDOT in current years that is later repaid by VDOT to expedite projects funded under the program. Mr. Robinson estimates this program yields approximately six or seven paving projects per year and will continue into the foreseeable future.

Mr. Robinson also explained that Augusta County actively participates in the State’s Revenue Sharing Program for increasing the amount of funding eligible to projects in the Six Year Secondary Roadway Plan. Currently, the County reserves \$1,000,000 that is matched by VDOT for implementing roadway projects. In 2005, the Revenue Sharing Program was expanded to make funds available for counties and cities, meaning that competition for these funds could negatively impact future state monies sought after by Augusta County. The “combined budget” for the Six Year Secondary Roadway Program will be \$20,000,000 to \$30,000,000.

Further related to funding of transportation projects, Mr. Robinson noted that VDOT is required by Virginia State Law to fund transportation system maintenance and operations before allocating the remaining funds for new construction projects. He speculated that with an aging road and bridge infrastructure system and new roads being added to the State Secondary System (Augusta County can expect to add 10 to 20 miles per year) that VDOT could become a maintenance and operation only entity in the future. The state is seeking new revenues sources and innovative financing options to keep the new construction program viable.

Mr. Shy summarized his role in the site plan review process as identifying needed transportation improvements, and quantifying recommended transportation proffers. He stated that the Augusta County Zoning Ordinance requires that VDOT review development applications (i.e. rezoning & site plans) prior to final approval by the County Board. Typically, VDOT has two opportunities to review development applications – rezoning and site plan approval. During rezoning review, VDOT identifies a scope of study for the required traffic impact analysis (TIA) and identifies potential improvements that could be funded through proffers. At the time of site plan review, VDOT generally reviews driveway location/design, internal circulation, and impacts to the regional transportation network. At the time of construction, VDOT staff review the roads and utilize a checklist before accepting eligible roads into the state system.

Critical issues for VDOT that should be considered in the update to the County Comprehensive Plan include access management, on-site (i.e. internal) street interconnectivity, and review/revision of the rules and requirements associated with performance bonds posted by developers related to transportation improvements. Specifically, there needs to be a better connection between land use and transportation toward access management that increases efficiency and safety along corridors. The County should also consider policies to promote interconnectivity between developments (i.e. stub streets, shared access driveways, etc.) that minimize conflict points along the regional transportation system. Mr. Shy also favors revisions to the rules and requirements associated with performance bonds required for new development that protects the encumbered monies until the VDOT “check list” is completed; thereby ensuring that private development pays for its fair share of impacts to the transportation system. Mr. Shy and Mr. Robinson suggested that the County get the roads with posted bonds into the system more quickly for more efficient tracking, letting VDOT start its check list after 3 dwelling units have been completed, and reserving \$50,000 per mile in the bond for transportation improvements until completion of the check list.

In terms of alternate modes of transportation, Mr. Robinson reported that public transit (i.e. bus and rail) expenditures are provided as line items in the Six Year Primary and Secondary Roadway Programs. Bicycle and Pedestrian enhancements are generally provided through competitive TEA-21 grants (80% federal & 20% local funding formula). Sidewalks are typically included with new construction projects in urban areas; however, in some cases they may not be constructed and the shoulder only graded to receive a sidewalk in the future.

Reference Materials

The following plans, policies, and project lists impacting transportation planning decisions within Augusta County were supplied to Kimley-Horn for review:

- Rural Rustic Road Program
- 2005 Tentative Enhancement Allocations
- Policy for Integrating Bicycle and Pedestrian Accommodations
- VTRANS 2005 prints from the internet
- VDOT 2025 Highway Plan vision projects (financially unconstrained)
- Route 262 project information from the internet
- Six-Year Improvement Program project list
- Secondary System Construction Program for Augusta County
- Waynesboro 2020 Transportation Plan
- Staunton 2020 Transportation Plan
- VDOT Minimum Standards Of Entrances to State Highways
- VDOT Staunton District Subdivision Checklist
- VDOT Daily Traffic Volume Estimates for 2003

Follow-Up Actions:

Mr. Whyte will review the materials transmitted to KHA during the interview and follow-up with Mr. Robinson for additional questions, if necessary.

Mr. Whyte will secure (if available) copies of the recently completed bicycle master plans for the City of Staunton and the Central Shenandoah PDC to use in his evaluation of opportunities for regional bicycle/pedestrian connections within Augusta County.

Mr. Robinson and Mr. Short noted that they would like to be further involved in the planning process. They each indicated that they would like to receive email notifications of project milestones and upcoming project meetings (Steering Committee, etc.). They also indicated that they would like to receive transportation-related materials for the comprehensive plan to review.

AUGUSTA COUNTY, VIRGINIA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE 2005 - 2025 RECORD OF CONTACT

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Contact: William Monroe, P.E., Senior Project Engineer
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Interview Date: June 2, 2005

Recorded By: Matt Noonkester, Kimley-Horn & Associates, Inc. (KHA)

Personal Interview:

Mr. Noonkester conducted an in-person interview with Mr. Fanfoni, Mr. Beasley, and Mr. Monroe to discuss the current efforts of Augusta County for updating their adopted Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Noonkester started the interview by introducing the project, explaining the stakeholder interview process, and discussing the format for the interview. Mr. Fanfoni, Mr. Beasley, and Mr. Monroe collectively provided an overview of their roles within the Service Authority and responded to specific discussion questions posed by KHA; formulated prior to the meeting and shared with the interviewees for their preparation. All three interviewees provided written comments to the discussion questions formulated by the consultant to supplement verbal information conveyed during the interview. A summary of the interview is organized below under the following subject headings: intergovernmental coordination, key issues, and reference materials.

Intergovernmental Coordination

Mr. Fanfoni, Mr. Beasley, and Mr. Monroe each explained their role within the Augusta County Service Authority (ACSA) and their regular interactions with other county offices. Mr. Monroe is responsible for reviewing site plan and rezoning applications on behalf of the ACSA, evaluates proposed service extensions, responds to citizen requests and questions, and participates in evaluations for expanded services available within already developed areas (i.e. potential new sanitary sewer service where only potable water service exists today or in locations where private systems have failed). Mr. Beasley, among other duties, provides interface with citizen groups and private developers in support of Mr. Monroe's responsibilities; especially during the designation of Public Use Overlay Districts. Mr. Fanfoni supports his staff on day-to-day duties and coordinates with county department heads and elected officials on long-range planning issues impacting the efficient provision of public facilities and services.

Staff for the Augusta County Service Authority report to an appointed Board of Directors that is separate from the County Board of Supervisors. The ACSA also maintains an independent Water and Sewer Master

Plan that is based on the development patterns and policies advocated for in the currently adopted Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Fanfoni explained that it is the mission of the ACSA to provide public facilities and services to Augusta County in a manner consistent with the County's adopted Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Fanfoni says that the Water and Sewer Master Plan (last revised in 1996) will be updated shortly after completion of this Comprehensive Plan Update. All three interviewees expressed concern for fulfilling certain obligations set forth in the Comprehensive Plan in a fiscally responsible and efficient manner based on the expansive area of the county, disjointed utility systems, and lack of tools for influencing both the sequencing of development and requiring that new development/beneficiaries of service enhancements pay their fair share of the implementation costs. In many ways, the interviewees expressed that the left hand and the right hand of county government are not working together to provide needed infrastructure in narrowly defined areas of high growth.

Key Issues

The ACSA, county government, and state health department do not have a system for coordinating common interests and achieving similar goals. Mr. Fanfoni explained that it is very difficult for the ACSA to provide sufficient infrastructure to all of the land area deemed developable by the county (i.e. urban and/or community development service areas) with their limited financial resources. One cause of this problem is the presence of disjointed utility systems throughout the county that do not allow excess capacity in one system to be shared with another deficient system. A second cause of this problem is timing and available development areas; whereby the ACSA invests millions of dollars for providing infrastructure to serve anticipated development and then the market/private development/economic development interests decide to "leap frog" into another portion of the urban service area deficient in public facilities and services (for which the ACSA was not planning to serve in the short-term planning horizon). This "timing" problem occurs because all land within the urban service and community development areas is on the table at one time; even though not all of these areas are currently served by the necessary potable water and/or sanitary services sufficient to meet their demands. Mr. Fanfoni summarized his point by stating that the ACSA is up against a wall trying to guess where development will go next.

The most pressing infrastructure need within the county is for providing adequate wastewater treatment capacity. This issue will become more severe as the State Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) releases its final rules and regulations for protecting water quality in the Chesapeake Bay Drainage Basin. Mr. Fanfoni commented that these requirements will have a significant impact for limiting development because once the capacity limits for wastewater treatment plants are set in 2005 it will be very difficult to raise them. This problem is compounded for areas such as Augusta County where nine individual wastewater treatment plants are operated and there is no existing infrastructure to interconnect them for sharing available capacities. The ACSA will also have to deal with a forthcoming state requirement for localities that provide potable water service to provide up to a 50-year water acquisition plan.

All three interviewees expressed a need to better coordinate new development with the provision of public facilities and services. For the ACSA, cost is the bottom line and opportunities to provide concentrations of development lowers the per share burden on new connections. Mr. Monroe commented that the cost of development (particularly the cost of operating and maintaining systems) is much higher for projects that cause extension of potable water and sanitary sewer infrastructure as compared to reflecting development back to more central areas of the existing systems. He continued to say that there needs to be better coordination between the Comprehensive Plan and the Service Authority Master Plan for providing efficient infrastructure to new development; conflict exists between policies in both documents (Mr. Monroe later expanded on this discussion: the Service Authority Master Plan was developed around the 1st comp. plan. Perhaps this was part of the discussion about consolidation and the fact that the original plan looked at where our utilities were located, regardless of the ability of these facilities to provide adequate service and support the growth). Given this there needed to be better correlation between our system design/master plan and the comp plan. For example, the original comp plan looked at where we have small service lines (usually near the end of the system) and included them in the urban service areas. However, the waterline is not adequate to support development under the current County requirements and other modifications or system changes are

made to accommodate the development – a new booster station, a new tank, etc., which may not be the most cost effective from an O&M perspective. Redirecting the growth inward toward mainlines would enhance the system, quality of service, and its efficiency. One big problem is when new development proposing well and septic systems is allowed to be built inside an urban service area that has already been provided with adequate public facilities to meet anticipated demands. Mr. Fanfoni explained that developers are sometimes building at much lower densities and intensities than allowed under their specific zoning classifications to avoid expensive connection fees and on-site infrastructure improvements; and this means that bond money spent to gear up for the anticipated demand is lost – causing immediate revenue problems and potentially impacting the debt rating for the Service Authority in the future. Mr. Beasley also commented that the ACSA sometimes inherits private wastewater treatment systems and funding is not generally given to maintain them; leaving the Service Authority responsible for absorbing the costs. Solutions discussed to protect public investment in these areas include minimum densities and intensities and/or the denial of proposed projects because they either require unbudgeted expansion of an infrastructure system or the project does not intend to connect into the existing systems. Mr. Fanfoni also noted that the ACSA receives no county growth tax monies for providing public facilities and services and therefore they must rely on user fees for their survival.

During the interview, several innovative solutions already employed by the Service Authority were inventoried and potential tools for promoting fiscally responsible development were mentioned. Mr. Beasley voiced that people are reluctant to let growth pay for growth although there are several locations elsewhere in the Commonwealth of Virginia that are requiring developers to pay their fair share for impacts on the surrounding infrastructure. Mr. Fanfoni stated that we need to look at reinforcing mandatory hook-up fees in the Comprehensive Plan to more equally share the cost of improvements. Ken also mentioned that the connection and user fees for the ACSA are already much higher than other localities and current policy for extending public infrastructure and cost recovery are making this situation worse. Mr. Monroe mentioned existing “Community Service Districts” that are used for dealing with growth issues and covering a portion of the cost associated with failing septic systems or dry wells. These Community Service Districts determine the cost for needed improvements, set an assessed cost among the beneficiaries, and determine an expiration date for fulfilling the debt. Mr. Beasley commented that these are very successful. Mr. Fanfoni and Mr. Beasley also summarized technological improvements that have been made within the County’s systems that provide higher level of service at a lower cost to the provider (e.g. regional management programs for water quality monitoring).

The Service Authority has concerns over requests from the Office of Community Development for reserving system capacity for committed development potential at the time of rezoning approval (The requests in this case have only been for comment on the availability of service at the time of rezoning – with this, however, comes some concern that the reasoning for approving a rezoning is based on today’s availability, which does not take into account existing land already zoned for development). Currently, the ACSA does not reserve capacity until they have received adequate site calculations and payment for capacities from the developer. This disconnect between committed development and actual development applications (i.e. building activity) means that adequate capacity for all committed development may not be available at the time buildings and/or other major investments are made towards the project. One potential result is litigation by the private land owner to recoup lost investments. Mr. Beasley also commented that there is a complete lack of corridor protection for transmission lines maintained by the ACSA. These transmission lines are vital for creating an efficient, interconnected system. Designation of these corridors should be a priority for this Comprehensive Plan Update; especially given the forthcoming Chesapeake Bay rules and regulations. Furthermore, there needs to be protection afforded to new and proposed transmission lines serving the ACSA from the potential of excessive lateral connections that diminish the function of the trunk line.

Mr. Beasley voiced concern that the current rules and regulations associated with “Public Use Overlay Districts” (PUOD) are not supportive of public facilities and services and this creates an unnecessary need for variances. The cause of this problem is in the language establishing the PUOD in that all underlying zoning regulations remain with the overlay. One example cited during the interview was construction of emergency signal towers associated with a pump station or water tank. The 35-foot tower requires a variance

and a proffer to supplement the public facility; this could be addressed as part of the rules and regulations accompanying a Public Use Overlay District.

Reference Materials

The following information was supplied to Kimley-Horn for further review:

- Interoffice Correspondence, Ken Fanfoni to Dale Cobb, Comprehensive Plan Comments, February 11, 2004
- Written comments to KHA discussion questions – William Monroe, Bo Beasley, and Ken Fanfoni
- ACSA Water and Sewer Master Plan, 1996 (electronic copy)
- ACSA Map of Public Water Mains, Created June 2, 2005
- ACSA Map of Public Sanitary Sewer Mains, Created June 2, 2005
- Landfill Management Agreement, draft language
- Wastewater Treatment & Potable Water Interlocal Agreement, City of Staunton & ACSA, August 26, 1997
- Potable Water Interlocal Agreement, Town of Craigsville & ACSA, January 3, 2002
- Wastewater Treatment & Potable Water Interlocal Agreement, City of Waynesboro & ACSA, December 12, 1996

Follow-Up Actions:

Mr. Noonkester will download an electronic copy of the Construction Standards Manual from the ACSA homepage for review.

Kimley-Horn will review written responses to the discussion questions provided by the interviewees to supplement the information summarized above. All information will be considered in developing the Comprehensive Plan Update.

AUGUSTA COUNTY SERVICE AUTHORITY
Interoffice Correspondence

TO: Jeremy Sharp

FROM: Ken Fanfoni

XC: William Monroe, Bo Beasley, Tracy Pyles

SUBJECT: Comments on Comp Plan Record of Contact

DATE: June 27, 2005

I only have a few comments. First, under intergovernmental coordination, the ACSA Board is referred to as “elected”, whereas it is an appointed board.

Under Key Issues, the reference to the Water Supply Planning Regulation should clarify that this will be a County government responsibility. The rule requires 50 year projections of demands for municipal and private water supplies, private wells, industrial use, agricultural use, etc. The ACSA can assist with information on our system, but the bulk of the rule will have to be addressed by the County. Our point was that this should be a part of the upcoming Comp Plan study, as available water supplies will impact many issues in the document.

In the discussion of projects with private well and septic in areas that should have public utilities, this is related to several concerns. When a developer has a project that raises concerns over limited wastewater treatment capacity, low water pressures, or limited fire flow, his first reaction is to lower his density and to just provide private well and septic. However, public utility infrastructure may already be in the area, with public funds being committed for upgrades and expansions. But if the timing of our improvements is too slow to meet developer needs, they can propose the well/septic option. This reduces the long term need for the improvements, reduces our potential payback through connection fees, and mixes private and public services in areas that are being planned and built for public service. Over time, this could result in unnecessary costs for oversized infrastructure that doesn’t have the customer base to pay for it.

There is a comment that Bo states that the ACSA inherits failed septic systems. Actually, we have inherited failed private wastewater treatment systems that were “donated” to the County/ACSA, but failed individual septic systems can only be served by line extensions, which require board approval. I am not sure if the comment was interpreted correctly.

I want to emphasize that the reserved capacity issue for wastewater treatment needs to be clearly understood by all involved in the comp plan process. Expensive upgrades, tighter limits, and caps on future plant expansions will combine to make treatment capacity a limited commodity in the future. We must all be on the same page when it comes to how to deal with this diminishing resource. Expansions will be allowed, but at much higher costs for construction and with a perpetual cost to purchase discharge rights from other localities (if available). The obligation of the ACSA to hold treatment capacity for proposed projects, future Comp Plan ideas, or

undetermined industrial recruitment must be balanced against the requirement that only approved projects that have paid appropriate fees can be guaranteed service. This relates back to William's comment concerning the issue of rezoning requests being tied to available capacity. There is no way for us to serve all of the existing zoned property if it were to develop on public sewer, so asking us for a commitment on a potential rezoning puts us in an awkward situation. If we say that capacity is available today, and the property is rezoned, it is likely that development of that property in the next decade may find that services are no longer available. The ACSA cannot be making reservations of service for unpaid properties, and on the other hand we do not wish to accept connection fees for unknown projects, in order to prevent a wealthy developer coming to Augusta County and pre-purchase all remaining wastewater connections. Hence our "requirement" that before we accept fees, and reserve capacity, the project must have a completed application on file with Community Development, so that we know the exact service needs, number of units, etc. before accepting a payment. It is my hope that once we complete the Comp Plan process, all County agencies and the ACSA fully understand this situation and can work together to avoid planning conflicts.