



Clarke County Planning Commission

AGENDA – Comprehensive Plan Committee Meeting

Tuesday, July 2, 2024 – 2:00PM

Berryville/Clarke County Government Center – A/B Meeting Room

For more information on this public meeting, please contact the Clarke County Department of Planning at (540) 955-5132 or visit the Clarke County website at www.clarkecounty.gov.

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3	Old Business -- Continued Discussion, Rural Lands Plan Development	
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A	Continued Discussion -- Plan Layout and Organization	
	-- Comprehensive Outline Working Draft (UPDATED)	pp. 10-26
B	Discussion – Updated Work Plan, Village Meetings, and Outreach Initiatives	
	-- Work Plan (UPDATED)	pp. 27-28
4	New Business	--
	-- Schedule Upcoming Meetings	--
5	Adjourn	

Upcoming Meetings:

- Tuesday, July 23 (2:00PM)
- To be scheduled – August



Clarke County Planning Commission

DRAFT MINUTES – Comprehensive Plan Committee Meeting

Monday, May 20, 2024 – 2:00PM

Berryville/Clarke County Government Center – A/B Meeting Room

ATTENDANCE:			
Randy Buckley (White Post)	✓	John Staelin (Millwood)	✓
Bob Glover (Millwood)	✓	Terri Catlett (Board of Supervisors)	✓
George L. Ohrstrom, II (Ex Officio)	X		

STAFF PRESENT: Brandon Stidham (Director of Planning), Jeremy Camp (Senior Planner/Zoning Administrator)

CALL TO ORDER: By Mr. Stidham at 2:01PM.

1. Approval of Agenda

Members approved the agenda by consensus as presented by Staff.

2. Approval of Minutes – April 15, 2024 Meeting

Commissioner Staelin referenced page 3 of the minutes, eighth line in the third paragraph, and asked if it should be scenic “views” instead of “values.” Mr. Stidham replied that “values” is correct.

Members voted unanimously to approve the April 15, 2024 meeting minutes as presented.

Motion to approve the April 15, 2024 meeting minutes as presented:			
Buckley	AYE	Staelin	AYE (moved)
Glover	AYE (seconded)	Catlett	AYE

3. Old Business -- Continued Discussion, Rural Lands Plan Development

Mr. Stidham said that for today’s meeting, he will present a more detailed plan outline that shows how the work product from the Committee’s issue identification will be incorporated into the plan draft. He said that if there is time left over at the end of the meeting, he wants to discuss planning for the village workshops and other potential outreach opportunities.

Mr. Stidham began the outline review by stating that the introduction chapter contains more substantive narratives in order to explain the specific issues in greater detail. He noted that this approach was also used in the Berryville Area Plan. He then reviewed the list of issue examples included in the staff memo on page 10 of 25. He said the completed draft should include very clear position statements for each issue that will be coordinated with the goals and strategies later in the plan. He then reviewed the draft comprehensive outline beginning with the executive summary in section A.

Regarding the description of unincorporated areas, Commissioner Staelin suggested including the business intersections at Waterloo and Double Tollgate. Mr. Stidham said that he will include this in the outline. Regarding the list of rural subdivisions, Commissioner Staelin asked if River Park

should be included. Commissioner Glover suggested including Calmes Neck and Mr. Stidham replied that it would be good to include it because there are a number of private roads in that subdivision. Commissioner Glover said there are several other similar subdivisions and Mr. Stidham added that he would try to come up with a more thorough list of rural subdivisions as a resource.

Regarding the Mountain Land Plan history, Commissioner Catlett asked which version generated the most resident feedback. Mr. Stidham replied that he thinks it was the 2005 update.

Mr. Stidham reviewed section B which would include detailed narratives of the various policy positions. Regarding the growth policies, Commissioner Staelin suggested making the third bullet -- where growth would have the least impact on natural resources, agriculture, and scenic open space -- as the first bullet. Commissioners Glover and Catlett asked why the term “scenic” is included to describe open space. Mr. Stidham replied that he did not want to assume that all open space is scenic. He added that in most cases, “open space” is referenced as being scenic or of importance and not referred to generically as all open space. He noted that open space that does not have good soil characteristics could be a good location for a non-farm use. He added that referencing open space generally could be construed that we want to protect all open spaces from non-farm uses. He also said that the word “scenic” is limiting and noted that he would delete it.

Mr. Stidham reviewed section C and noted that it will contain the newly-developed policy positions regarding agriculture. He said that since this will be the first time some of these positions have been put in writing that it would be a good idea to discuss them with the full Commission before presenting to the public. He then reviewed the first policy position that there is a preference for “traditional farming” as by-right agriculture and that traditional farms and some agribusinesses should be “minimally regulated” under the Zoning Ordinance. Commissioner Glover said that “minimally regulated” is a loaded term. Mr. Stidham replied that he wants to review the policies on agribusiness and agritourism and see if the Committee things he has the balance correct.

Mr. Stidham reviewed the policy for agribusinesses, stating that those businesses which provide direct support to county farms are encouraged but should be compatible with rural areas and may require a higher level of zoning scrutiny. He noted that agribusinesses include businesses that support traditional farming operations as well as non-traditional farming operations that have a production element and/or heavy reliance on public access. He gave examples of support businesses including horse boarding and abattoirs. Commissioner Glover said that he is not opposed to the “minimally regulated” language and said that some people may be upset that these uses are minimally regulated and others may be upset that the uses are regulated at all. Mr. Stidham said that we have the authority to impose reasonable regulations on agriculture and some counties have stricter regulations than Clarke County. Commissioner Glover suggested using “carefully monitored.” Mr. Stidham asked if he should use the term differently for the two enumerated types of agribusinesses or is the concern with the term in general. Commissioner Staelin suggested explaining the reason for the bias in the regulations as an alternative to referencing “minimally regulated.” Mr. Stidham suggested just using the term “by-right” to de-politicize the issue however it does introduce the use of a technical term that can be confusing. Mr. Camp suggested using “reasonable regulations.” Commissioner Staelin suggested continuing to think about alternatives to this term for now.

Mr. Stidham asked what members thought of the two types of agribusinesses noted in the outline. Commissioner Staelin suggested differentiating between agricultural uses that use water over an extended period of time, noting that traditional farms use water in large quantities seasonally whereas factory-oriented facilities use water year round. Mr. Stidham said that there were previous discussions about how much water that traditional farms such as cattle farms use. Vice-Chair Buckley noted that outdoor farming uses water through irrigation seasonally as opposed to indoor farms that use water all year. Mr. Stidham noted that he addresses hydroponic growing facilities later in the outline.

Mr. Stidham reviewed the policy wording for agritourism and agritainment businesses, noting that they require a higher level of scrutiny to ensure there are no substantial impacts to the public's health, safety, or general welfare. He also reviewed the point that we would not consider businesses that rely primarily on customer access and providing "an experience," as opposed to growing crops and raising livestock, as by-right agriculture. Commissioner Catlett asked if the language in this point follows State code language and Mr. Stidham replied no. Commissioner Staelin said that this helps to distinguish these uses from the traditional farms that we consider to be by-right agriculture that should be minimally regulated. Mr. Stidham added that we might want to say that agritourism and agritainment businesses should not be minimally regulated as traditional farming.

Mr. Stidham reviewed the policy wording for onsite sales by farms of their products. Commissioner Glover returned to the issue of agritourism and commented that we say that some agribusinesses should be minimally regulated and that agritourism should not be minimally regulated. He noted that businesses like Veramar Vineyard have been farming grapes for years and there are some discrepancies with how the State code addresses agriculture. He asked if we could reference a review process to address this issue. Commissioner Staelin asked what are considered to be agribusinesses. Mr. Stidham replied that it is a broad term that can include agritourism businesses. Commissioner Staelin suggested taking out reference to "some agribusinesses" and just leave traditional farms as by-right agriculture. He added that agribusinesses and agritourism can be dealt with separately. Mr. Stidham suggested keeping businesses that support traditional farming operations as uses that should be minimally regulated and addressing production and public access businesses separately. He added that the second category of businesses really describes agritourism. Commissioner Staelin said that we have three categories of businesses and Mr. Stidham replied yes and they are traditional farms, agribusinesses, and agritourism/agritainment. Commissioner Glover noted that we also have industrial-scale agriculture and Mr. Stidham noted that this would be a fourth category. Commissioner Staelin said that the categorization is an interesting concept.

Mr. Stidham noted Commissioner Glover's example of Veramar Vineyard and said that they are obviously a farm because they grow acres and acres of grapes there. He added that not all wineries grow their grapes onsite and there are some farm breweries that do not grow hardly any product onsite. Commissioner Glover said he is concerned with tripping over possible conflicts with State code requirements. Mr. Stidham asked whether we want to create a distinction between farm wineries, breweries and distilleries that are true farming operations versus ones that are not growing significant amounts of product onsite. Vice-Chair Buckley noted the term "value-added" as it relates to agriculture which is the concept of a farmer increasing their profit by turning their product into a more profitable one, such as a dairy farmer turning milk into cheese. He said in this example the farmer would be happy to sell their cheese onsite but they do not need to have live music at their farm in order to sell the cheese. He suggested researching this term and seeing how it could be

worked into the plan language. Mr. Stidham said that we would want a farm to be able to sell its own products onsite.

Mr. Stidham reviewed the policy wording for industrial-scale agriculture. Commissioner Staelin noted a farm he once toured where all of the livestock was contained within and never left a building, and he asked whether we need to make a distinction in defining industrial-scale agriculture. Mr. Stidham replied that livestock contained within a building would be regulated as an intensive livestock operation subject to State code requirements. Commissioner Glover asked whether White Post Dairy is a confinement operation and Vice-Chair Buckley replied yes. Commissioner Catlett asked about poultry and swine farms and Vice-Chair Buckley replied yes as well. Mr. Stidham noted that White Post Dairy is the county's only intensive livestock facility and they have an approved nutrient management plan. Commissioner Staelin asked if a nutrient management plan is the only requirement for an intensive livestock facility and Mr. Stidham replied that there are also setback requirements. Commissioner Catlett asked how other farmers in the area view the White Post Dairy. Vice-Chair Buckley said that there is some level of competition and added that the Dairy owners do a good job of managing their land. Commissioner Glover asked why they run a containment operation rather than have their cows in the pasture. Vice-Chair Buckley replied that this is the model for dairy operations now due to the number of cows milked versus the amount of open space needed for pasturing.

Commissioner Staelin said that it appears that intensive livestock facilities are not to be treated as by-right agriculture based on the proposed definition. Mr. Stidham said that the wording does appear to be confusing, noting that the second bullet says that intensive livestock facilities are by-right agriculture and protected under State law. He added that industrial-scale agriculture is primarily hydroponic growing within a fully-contained building. He also said these uses should be subject to a special use permit and site development plan process because they would be constructing a building. Commissioner Staelin said we need clarification between the two confusing bullet points. Mr. Stidham noted that it is confusing because we would be saying that it is okay to raise livestock within a contained building but not to grow crops. He added that we can include language that State code preempts localities from requiring special use permits for intensive livestock facilities. He also noted that we can say that intensive livestock operations are not industrial-scale agriculture for specified reasons. Commissioner Catlett replied that then you would only be referring to hydroponic growing operations as industrial-scale agriculture. Commissioner Staelin said that this would clear up the confusion and Commissioner Catlett said that referencing a higher level of scrutiny is good.

Mr. Camp asked how we are going to differentiate between a large horse barn and a hydroponic facility. Mr. Stidham replied that a large horse barn typically is not an intensive livestock facility. Mr. Camp noted that if we are characterizing hydroponic facilities differently based on the large building size, there are also a number of large size horse barns in the area. Commissioner Staelin noted that the difference is that the horses go out of the building and he is not aware of any facilities where the horses never leave the building. Vice-Chair Buckley said that a hydroponic facility is a climate-controlled building and a horse barn could be a structure with open spaces and open doorways. Commissioner Glover noted that greenhouses are climate-controlled with fans. Mr. Stidham noted that greenhouses that may be partially open and are not fully climate-controlled should be differentiated from hydroponic facilities that are totally enclosed and climate-controlled. He gave an example of a vegetable farmer that grows all of their product in hoop greenhouses as

being different from a hydroponic facility. Commissioner Catlett noted that in Germany horses are sometimes raised and kept in fully-enclosed structures but this is likely due to less open space availability. Vice-Chair Buckley said the only problem he sees is with the definition of industrial-scale agriculture and suggested removing intensive livestock facilities from the definition. Mr. Stidham said that he will delete the first bullet with the contradictory language. Vice-Chair Buckley asked if we can reference nutrient management plan requirements in the description of intensive livestock facilities and Mr. Stidham replied that he would reference the County's zoning regulations. Commissioner Staelin asked how the language addresses hog farming. Mr. Stidham replied that the State code limits us to the parameters of the intensive livestock regulations.

Mr. Stidham reviewed the proposed policy not to treat the growing of crops regulated as a controlled substance as agriculture. He said the distinction is that cannabis production is regulated by the Virginia Alcoholic Beverage Control Authority (ABC) and not the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (VDACS). Vice-Chair Buckley said that this is a good fact to use to support this position. Mr. Stidham said that the General Assembly will amend the State code if they want us to treat cannabis production as agriculture in the future.

Mr. Stidham reviewed the land conversion threats to agriculture and forest resources. He noted the inclusion of a statement on why lots of around 20 acres in size results in parcelization and threatens traditional farming. Commissioner Staelin noted that the counter argument to this position is that vegetable farmers can be very productive on five acres of land. Mr. Camp noted that we are not trying to discourage vegetable farming on 20 acre lots, we are discouraging the subdivision of new 20 acre lots.

Mr. Stidham reviewed the challenges and threats to quality of life in rural areas. He also reviewed challenges to villages and other unincorporated neighborhoods and communities. Members had no questions or comments on these sections.

Mr. Stidham moved on to a review of the draft Goals and Strategies that will be in Chapter II and began with Section A (Agriculture and Preservation of Farmland and Open Space). He reviewed Goal 1 (Protect and Preserve Farmland and Open Space) Strategy 3 regarding opposing efforts or actions to convert important farmland and open space to nonfarm uses which primarily benefit areas outside of the county. Members agreed with the draft strategy. He also reviewed Goal 1 Strategy 4 which would summarize the County's position on behind-the-meter solar, utility-scale solar, and community-scale solar. Members also agreed with this draft strategy.

Mr. Stidham reviewed Goal 2 (Ensure compatible agribusiness, agritourism, and industrial-scale agriculture). Commissioner Staelin asked about the word "compatible" and asked what we mean by compatible including to what it should be compatible. He noted that we use "compatible" throughout the document in a number of ways. Mr. Stidham said that he would work on using a word other than "compatible" in the goal. Commissioner Staelin asked about the language in Goal 1 Strategy 7 to preserve lands adjacent to the towns which contain specified characteristics. Mr. Stidham replied that he thinks the language was chosen to avoid the appearance that we are trying to surround the lands around the towns with conservation easements.

Mr. Stidham reviewed Goal 3 (Provide support to the agricultural community). Regarding Strategy 6, Commissioner Staelin asked whether the only purpose of having a database of County agricultural

operations and support businesses is to communicate the information to the community and interested stakeholders. He added that he did not know what would be collected in the database other than names and addresses. Mr. Stidham replied that we want to make sure that we know all of the programs that are available to support agricultural businesses, adding that if we are not providing direct support we should be able to provide indirect support when needed in the form of resources. He gave examples including how new farms can work with VDACS to get started and what grant programs are available to fence cattle out of streams. Commissioner Staelin suggested expanding the wording beyond “communicate.” Mr. Stidham suggested replacing “other” with “provide” in the last line to note that we would be proactive in making these resources available to the public. Commissioner Staelin said that this fixes the problem. Commissioner Catlett asked whether the database would effectively document the businesses and resources that we have such as the number of farms. Mr. Stidham replied that as the Committee is discussing this issue, he is becoming more concerned with using the word “database.” He suggested replacing “Develop a database of” with “Compile” and members agreed that this is better. Commissioner Staelin also suggested adding “understand and” before “communicate.”

Mr. Stidham reviewed Section B (Protection and Preservation of the County’s Mountain Areas). Regarding Goal 1 (Limit the impacts of development activity in the Mountain Areas) Strategy 3, Mr. Stidham noted that this is included to guard against any developments in adjoining jurisdictions like Loudoun that may have some elements such as entrances in Clarke. Commissioner Catlett gave the recent glamping proposal in Loudoun as an example. Commissioner Staelin asked if an applicant applied for a special use permit in this scenario but the only part of the use in Clarke is the entrance, could we legally turn down the application if it is an allowed use and the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) approved the entrance design. Mr. Stidham replied that we can turn down an application if the operation in Loudoun does not meet Clarke’s use regulations. He gave the example of Clarke allowing only primitive campgrounds but a Loudoun applicant proposes an RV park. He said that since RV parks would not be allowed in Clarke, Staff could refuse to accept the application because it is not an allowable use. Commissioner Staelin asked if this would stand up in court and cited the example of Lake Frederick in which the US 522 entrance is in Clarke, adding that the Board of Supervisors at the time did not think that they could stop the development. Mr. Stidham said that he thinks the difference in that case was that the access road was a State road used by the Department of Conservation and Recreation to access the lake. Mr. Camp said that it would be difficult to block if the adjoining county line came up to the state road but if any portion of the entrance and access road has to be constructed on Clarke land, it could be turned down. Mr. Stidham noted that recently a Sheetz was proposed at the entrance to Lake Frederick and a small portion of land along US 522 would be used for the acceleration lane and some landscaping and stormwater features. He said that Staff’s interpretation was that the Clarke portion is zoned Agriculture-Open Space-Conservation (AOC) and could not be rezoned to Highway Commercial (CH) to allow those features to be constructed. Mr. Camp added that this probably killed the project. Commissioner Staelin gave the example of the 7-11 in Double Tollgate that pumps treated effluent to a discharge point in Frederick and asked if this strategy would prevent the scenario of effluent being pumped into Clarke. Mr. Stidham replied yes and we would require zoning approval for a convenience store as well. He also said that he believes this is an issue on which the County would want to stand its ground.

Mr. Stidham noted that he has fewer proposed strategies for the mountain areas than for the valley areas, adding that he welcomes suggestions from the members on additional strategies.

Regarding Goal 3 (Prevent adverse impacts from the public's access to the mountain area's recreational resources) Strategy 2, Mr. Stidham noted that this would require any improvements to parking and access points to be evaluated to determine whether the additional increase in visitors can be accommodated. Commissioner Staelin said that he read it to mean that we should construct the improvements to accommodate the visitor increase as opposed to using it to limit visitors. Commissioner Glover noted that parking areas will likely be filled regardless of how large you build them. Mr. Stidham suggested focusing on evaluating the impacts of the increase in capacity on the area because we are not suggesting that the parking areas and access points should be made larger. Commissioner Glover said that "evaluate the impacts of improving or expanding" gives the impression that we are on track to make these improvements. Mr. Stidham gave the example of allowing public boat landings to be expanded resulting in quadrupling of visitors. Commissioner Catlett suggested including reference to the health, safety, and welfare of the neighbors. Commissioner Staelin suggested that the language should say that we are not evaluating the need for expanding the infrastructure such as the need for more parking, we are evaluating the impacts that the expansion would cause. Mr. Stidham said that providing a list of those impacts would make it clearer. Vice-Chair Buckley noted that we are essentially saying that we do not want to perpetuate an increase in visitors. Commissioner Glover said that there are lot of impacts that come with visitor increase and gave the example of emergency services response needs on the Appalachian Trail. Mr. Stidham noted that you can say that we oppose improvements that would negatively impact neighbors, traffic, or cause illegal or overflow parking. Mr. Camp said that we are weighing the positives against the negatives.

Mr. Stidham said that he is not going to review Section C regarding Millwood Goals and Strategies as the Committee previously reviewed the language. Commissioner Staelin noted that he has a suggestion for Carter Hall in Goal 1 Strategy 3. He suggested referencing "Carter Hall and other large parcels in the Millwood Plan Area shall only be for residential and/or agricultural purposes" as opposed to singling out Carter Hall. Commissioner Catlett said that this is an excellent idea. Vice-Chair Buckley asked what could be read into "residential purposes." Mr. Stidham replied that this can be addressed by including "residential uses consistent with sliding-scale zoning."

Mr. Stidham said that he will continue to refine this draft and will only highlight the sections that have changed or that he wants to discuss. He said since this meeting went longer than expected, he will defer discussion of outreach workshops to the next meeting. He also said that we will need to spend more time planning the workshops so they will likely not be held until October. He said we may want to bring content to the full Commission in September

4. New Business

Members agreed to schedule the next two meetings for Tuesday, June 25 at 2:00PM and Tuesday, July 23 at 2:00PM. Mr. Stidham said he will email the dates to the members to confirm.

ADJOURN: Meeting was adjourned by consensus at 3:20PM.

Brandon Stidham, Clerk



Clarke County Department of Planning
Berryville-Clarke County Government Center
101 Chalmers Court, Suite B
Berryville, VA 22611

TO: Comprehensive Plan Committee

FROM: Brandon Stidham, Planning Director

RE: Continued Discussion, Rural Lands Plan update

DATE: June 26, 2024

Our two tasks for the July 2 Comprehensive Plan Committee are review and discussion of the revised Comprehensive Outline and planning for next project steps including village workshops and other outreach initiatives.

The updated Comprehensive Outline incorporates the discussion points from the May 20 meeting. We will be specifically reviewing the new text that is highlighted in yellow but members are welcome to raise comments and questions about any part of the outline. Of particular interest is the revised description of the five types of agricultural businesses and how each are categorized and regulated differently. Significant changes have been made from the previous version – please take note of the concept of “value-added products” as it relates to onsite sale of farm products, and also note reference to inclusion of uses that are not currently allowed under the Zoning Ordinance.

The second discussion topic is planning for the village meetings and any other outreach initiatives that the Committee wishes to pursue – a topic that we did not get to at our last meeting. As noted previously, some of the key issues identified for inclusion in the Plan have not been discussed directly by the full Commission and are somewhat new policy positions. It is recommended that the Committee discuss them with the full Commission at a future work session to obtain consensus before moving forward with presenting to the public. At the same time, the Committee can propose a public outreach schedule for the Commission’s review.

Previously, we planned on having informal public workshops on the village recommendations for Millwood, White Post, and Pine Grove. This was later reduced to workshops just for Millwood and White Post, and the idea of potentially combining them into a single workshop was also proposed. Members also briefly mentioned the possibility of holding other workshops on issues not specifically pertaining to the villages. Our goal should be to decide how many workshops we want to have on which topics and in which locations so we can present the concept to the full Commission. Once this has been determined by the Committee, Staff can develop a more accurate timeline to complete the remaining plan tasks. We can also discuss targeted outreach such as soliciting comments from specific agencies and organizations (e.g., Farm Bureau). A revised work plan with general timeline revisions is enclosed for discussion

Please let me know if you have questions or cannot attend the meeting.

(540) 955-5132
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COMPREHENSIVE OUTLINE – RURAL LANDS PLAN

CHAPTER I – Introduction

A. Executive Summary

- What constitutes the rural areas?
 - Unincorporated areas outside of the incorporated towns (Berryville and Boyce) and business intersections (Double Tollgate and Waterloo)
 - Villages (including “what is a village?”) of Millwood and White Post
 - Other communities (Pine Grove, Frogtown)
 - Large subdivisions in the valley areas (Blue Ridge Estates, Blue Ridge Downs, Blue Ridge 21, Keeneland)
 - Large subdivisions in the mountain areas (Shenandoah Retreat, Shenandoah Farms, River Park, Calmes Neck, Carefree Acres)
- History of the Agricultural and Mountain Land Plans, addition of Village Plan
 - Agricultural Land Plan – 1987, 1997, and 2016 iterations
 - Mountain Land Plan – 1994 and 2005 iterations
 - Village Plan – Guidance added to Comprehensive Plan in 2014
- Process for developing the Rural Lands Plan
 - Reasons for combining three plans into one
 - Committee work
 - Informal public outreach
 - Formal public hearings and adoption
- How to use the Rural Lands Plan
 - In concert with the Comprehensive Plan
 - Linkages to pertinent component plans (Transportation, Recreation, Historic Resources, Water Resources, Business Intersections)
 - Land use decisions
 - Ordinance development – Zoning, Subdivision, Well, Septic
 - Efforts and resource allocation to support the agricultural industry
 - Economic development and tourism policies
 - Other County resource investments – recreation, transportation, public water and sewer

CHAPTER II – The County’s Vision for Protecting the Rural Areas

A. What keeps the rural areas rural?

- Growth policies -- Focused-growth land use planning to avoid sprawl and allow development where:
 - It will have the least impact on natural resources, agriculture, and scenic open space
 - It can best be served by public infrastructure
 - The County can afford and has the resources to serve it with infrastructure of an appropriate scale (e.g., water, sewer, roads)
- Public water and sewer only provided in rural areas out of necessity (e.g., White Post water to address well contamination, Millwood sewer to address substandard sewage disposal methods)
- Tools in the toolbox
 - Sliding-scale zoning
 - AOC maximum lot size requirements
 - FOC subdivision regulations
 - Historic preservation
 - Conservation easement program
 - Land use taxation and the Agricultural & Forestal District (AFD) program
- Conservation easements
 - Leveraging grant funds, programs to place farms in easement
 - Cost of Community Services Study points
- Land use value taxation and the Agricultural & Forestal District program
 - Incentive to keep land in agriculture, forestry, or open space
 - Additional AFD program benefits, gateway to permanent conservation easement

B. Scope of agriculture

- Agriculture comes in many forms, some with impacts that differ from traditional farming operations:
 - Customer-oriented businesses can generate traffic and impacts to secondary roads and possible noise impacts to surrounding properties from events.
 - Agriculture in fully-enclosed, climate-controlled buildings consume farmland, have significant water usage, and can possibly generate light pollution.

REVISED DRAFT FOR COMMITTEE REVIEW – 7/2/2024 MEETING

- Code of Virginia limitations on local regulation of “agricultural operations” per Section 15.2-2288.6:
 - Localities cannot regulate the following activities at an agricultural operation unless there is a substantial impact on the health, safety, or general welfare of the public:
 - Agritourism activities
 - The sale of agricultural or silvicultural products, or the sale of agricultural-related or silvicultural-related items incidental to the agricultural operation
 - The preparation, processing, or sale of food products in compliance with subdivisions C 3, 4, and 5 of § 3.2-5130 or related state laws and regulations; or
 - Other activities or events that are usual and customary at Virginia agricultural operations.

Any local restriction placed on an activity listed in this subsection shall be reasonable and shall take into account the economic impact of the restriction on the agricultural operation and the agricultural nature of the activity.
- Localities cannot require a special use permit for any of the activities listed above on property that is zoned as an agricultural district or classification unless there is a substantial impact on the health, safety, or general welfare of the public.
- Except regarding the sound generated by outdoor amplified music, no local ordinance regulating the sound generated by any activity listed in subsection A shall be more restrictive than the general noise ordinance of the locality. In permitting outdoor amplified music at an agricultural operation, the locality shall consider the effect on adjoining property owners and nearby residents.
- "Agritourism activity" -- Any activity carried out on a farm or ranch that allows members of the general public, for recreational, entertainment, or educational purposes, to view or enjoy rural activities, including farming, wineries, ranching, horseback riding, historical, cultural, harvest-your-own activities, or natural activities and attractions. An activity is an agritourism activity whether or not the participant paid to participate in the activity. Code of Virginia Section 3.2-6400.
- "Agricultural operation" -- Any operation devoted to the bona fide production of crops, animals, or fowl, including the production of fruits and vegetables of all kinds, meat, dairy, and poultry products, nuts, tobacco, nursery, and floral products and the production and harvest of products from silviculture activity. "Agricultural operation" also includes any operation devoted to the housing of livestock as defined in § 3.2-6500. Code of Virginia Section 3.2-300.

- The County identifies five types of agricultural businesses, each with different levels of impacts that should be planned for and regulated separately:
 1. Traditional farming
 2. Low-impact agribusinesses
 3. Agritourism-oriented businesses
 4. Commercial-scale agribusinesses
 5. Industrial-scale agriculture

1. Traditional farming

- Traditional farming meets the State code definition of “agricultural operation.”
- Zoning Ordinance definition:

The use of land for tilling of the soil; the growing of crops or plant growth of any kind, including fruit, flowers, and ornamental plants; pasturage; dairying; or the raising of poultry and/or livestock.
- Traditional farming is by-right agriculture that is entitled to the protection of the Right-to-Farm Act.
 - The primary function of a traditional farm is the growing of crops and/or the raising of poultry or livestock.
 - Traditional farms should be minimally regulated under the Zoning Ordinance as “agriculture” and as allowed by the Code of Virginia.
 - Examples of traditional farms include crop production, pasturing, cattle/dairy farms, poultry farms, and horse farms.
 - Traditional farms include intensive livestock, dairy, and poultry facilities. These facilities should be regulated as allowed by the Code of Virginia to mitigate adverse impacts on the environment and on surrounding properties.
- Onsite sale of “value-added products” is an allowable accessory use to a traditional farm.
 - Definition of “value-added products” per U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA):

Value-added products are defined as follows:

 - *A change in the physical state or form of the product (such as milling wheat into flour or making strawberries into jam).*
 - *The production of a product in a manner that enhances its value, as demonstrated through a business plan (such as organically produced products).*
 - *The physical segregation of an agricultural commodity or product in a manner that results in the enhancement of the value of that commodity or product (such as an identity preserved marketing system).*

- Traditional farms may:
 - Process their own crops into value-added products such as fruits to jams or grasses and grains to hay and feed.
 - Process their own livestock into meat and meat products for resale.
 - Sell value-added products produced by other county farms. **NOTE – Not currently allowed under the Zoning Ordinance**

2. Low-impact agribusinesses

- These are businesses that provide direct support services to traditional farms and operate in a manner that has minimal if any adverse impact on surrounding properties and the environment.
- Low-impact agribusinesses are regulated as by-right uses subject to use regulations to ensure compatibility with surrounding rural areas.
- Low-impact agribusinesses may have limited or no agricultural production occurring onsite. **The agribusiness may be operated as a home occupation or as a standalone use regulated similarly to a home occupation.**
- Examples include horse boarding/training and animal services such as farriers and mobile livestock veterinarians.

3. Agritourism-oriented businesses

- Agritourism-oriented businesses rely on customer access to the property and, in many cases, providing “an experience” to visitors. These businesses include:
 - Traditional farms that conduct periodic or temporary agritourism activities as a way of generating additional income. Activities include seasonal events and festivals, farm-to-table events, pick-your-own fruits/vegetables, Christmas tree farms, and similar activities.
 - Traditional farms and businesses that produce a value-added product from agricultural products that are grown onsite, grown offsite, or a combination of both and which rely on customers to purchase the products onsite. These include:
 - Orchards
 - Tree farms
 - Plant nurseries and greenhouses
 - Farm wineries, farm breweries, and farm distilleries.
- Regulation of agritourism activities is limited by the Code of Virginia (see description at beginning of this subsection).
- Agritourism-oriented businesses require a higher level of scrutiny to ensure that there are no substantial impacts to the health, safety, or general welfare of the public. Therefore,

they should be regulated to the fullest extent allowed by the Code of Virginia to mitigate any negative impacts to the public and the environment.

4. Commercial-scale agribusinesses

- Commercial-scale agribusinesses also provide support to traditional farms but typically have greater impacts on surrounding properties and the environment such as noise, odor, traffic, or runoff. These impacts warrant regulation in some cases as a special use subject to site development plan review.
- Examples include:
 - Farm supplies sales (**Site development plan; Special use permit and site development plan required if buildings are 12,000 square feet or greater**)
 - Farm machinery sales and service (**Site development plan; Special use permit and site development plan required if buildings are 12,000 square feet or greater**)
 - Livestock auction markets (**Special use permit and site development plan**)
 - Large-scale farm markets in which retail sales are the primary use and agriculture is an accessory use or not conducted at all on the lot. Large-scale farm markets may also sell other types of products in addition to value-added products produced by traditional farms. (**Special use permit and site development plan for “retail business”**)
 - Small-scale processing and shipment of agricultural products (**NOTE – Not currently allowed under the Zoning Ordinance for agricultural products generally. Limited to small-scale processing of fruits and vegetables with special use permit and site development plan**)
 - Large animal veterinary and specialty hospitals (**Special use permit and site development plan for “veterinary clinic”**)
 - Abattoirs **NOTE – Not currently allowed under the Zoning Ordinance**

5. Industrial-scale agriculture

- Industrial-scale agriculture is not considered “by-right agriculture” and permissible in the County’s unincorporated areas.
- Define “industrial-scale agriculture” as controlled-environment agriculture within a fully-enclosed, climate-controlled building which relies on year-round water usage as opposed to seasonal irrigation. Examples include vertical farming, hydroponics, and aeroponics.
- Construction of industrial-scale agriculture buildings is considered to be conversion of farmland to a non-farm use. Therefore, the AOC and FOC Districts are not appropriate locations for industrial-scale agriculture.
- The growing of crops regulated as a controlled substance (e.g., cannabis) is considered to be industrial-scale agriculture and not traditional farming. Unless local authority is

preempted under the Code of Virginia in the future, the growing of crops regulated as a controlled substance shall not be allowed in the AOC and FOC Districts as “agriculture.”

C. Land conversion threats to agriculture and forest resources

- Land development and parcelization
 - Reiterate why we have our land use policies in the Comprehensive Plan and regulations in the Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances to address both
 - Reinforce limiting development to designated growth areas to avoid residential and commercial sprawl
 - Include statement on minimum lot size for traditional farming to address parcelization (e.g., the 20-acre lot issue)
- Nutrient credit banks
 - Explain how nutrient credit banks adversely impact agricultural land
 - Summarize Comprehensive Plan policy (Objective 1, Policy 9)
- Utility-scale solar
 - Describe differences between utility-scale, community-scale, community, and behind-the-meter solar
 - Explain 2010 text amendment to add “solar power plant” use and regulations and the 2024 modification
 - Desire to protect behind-the-meter usage, possible future exceptions for community-scale solar at a controlled scale that does not consume farmland or important open space
- Utility transmission lines
 - Describe increased demand for electricity, future proliferation and threats to County
 - Explain limitations on local government to block construction of new lines

D. Challenges and threats to quality of life in rural areas

- Include narrative on what to expect living in rural areas
 - Required AOC subdivision plat note:

AGRICULTURAL OPERATIONS NOTICE

This property is in the Agricultural-Open Space-Conservation (AOC) Zoning District. Agriculture is the primary economic activity of this zoning district. Owners, residents, and other users of property in the AOC District may be subjected to inconvenience, discomfort, and the possibility of injury to property

and health arising from agricultural operations even though conducted in accordance with best management practices and/or in accordance with existing laws and regulations of the Commonwealth and the County. Such agricultural operations may generate noise, odors, and dust, may involve the operation of machinery, including aircraft, the storage and disposal of manure, and the application of fertilizer, soil amendments, and pesticides. Owners, occupants, and users of land in the AOC district should be prepared to accept such inconveniences or discomfort as a normal and necessary aspect of living in a zoning district in a county with a strong rural character and an active agricultural sector.

- Required FOC subdivision plat notes:

EMERGENCY SERVICES NOTICE

The rural location of and limited access of this property, combined with adverse weather conditions, may delay or totally impede the timely response of emergency service agencies (police, fire, medical) despite their best efforts. The County of Clarke will not be subject to liability claims because of a delay in response from emergency service agencies resulting from the rural location of and limited access to the property.

FORESTRY OPERATIONS NOTICE

This property is in the Forestal-Open Space-Conservation (FOC) Zoning District. Forestry is the primary economic activity of this zoning district and is necessary for the health and viability of the forest resource itself. Owners, residents, and other users of property in the FOC District may be subjected to inconvenience, discomfort, and the possibility of injury to property and health arising from forestry operations even though conducted in accordance with best management practices and/or in accordance with existing laws and regulations of the Commonwealth and the County. Such forestry operations may generate noise, odors, and dust, and may involve the operation of machinery, including heavy equipment and chain saws. Debris such as treetops and limbs may be left on site at the conclusion of a forestry operation. Owners, occupants, and users of land in the FOC district should be prepared to accept such inconveniences or discomfort as a normal and necessary aspect of living in a zoning district in a county with a strong rural character and an active forestal sector.

- Limitations on soils for onsite sewage disposal systems, groundwater well susceptibility
 - Brief discussion on karst and soil suitability
 - Need for more stringent County septic system regulations
 - Potential for system failures, small lot limitations
 - Alternative septic system regulations – importance of annual maintenance
 - County may only provide assistance with system failures if they are widespread over multiple properties (e.g., Millwood sewer project, White Post water project)
- Excessive clearing of trees on mountain areas – visual impacts to mountain slopes

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- Explain right to harvest forestry resources, County process for confirming use of forestry management plan and practices
- Need to balance private property rights with desire to preserve trees
- Rural roads
 - Policy against widening public roads to increase capacity
 - Private roads are the sole responsibility of the property owners and public funds will not be used to upgrade them to state standards for public road acceptance.

E. Challenges to villages and other unincorporated neighborhoods and communities

- Long-term viability of villages as communities, need for controlled and compatible economic development
- Public water and sewer limitations, possible future failures and owner responsibilities
- Long-term upkeep of private roads
- Sanitary district model and similar approaches – circumstances under which the County would evaluate assisting a community with failing infrastructure

CHAPTER III – Goals and Strategies

A. Agriculture and Preservation of Farmland and Open Space

GOAL 1 – Protect and preserve farmland and open space.

Strategy 1. ~~Maintain existing and work to create~~ *Evaluate* new land development regulations that ensure the separation of agricultural uses from residential and commercial uses. Ensure that future residential and commercial development does not conflict with existing agricultural operations or consume prime farmland. ~~Examples include perimeter buffering of agricultural parcels, setback distances from property lines, and subdivision plat notes regarding existing agricultural operations on AOC-zoned properties.~~

Strategy 2. Continue to support the sliding-scale zoning system and the County’s approach to land use decision-making. *Maintain and periodically evaluate whether to strengthen regulations that guard against parcelization and reduction of lots to non-farmable sizes.*

Strategy 3. *Oppose any efforts or actions to convert important farmland and open space to nonfarm uses which primarily benefit areas outside of Clarke County including construction of new or expansion of existing utility transmission line corridors and related infrastructure.*

Strategy 4. *Continue to allow the use of behind-the-meter solar by property owners primarily for onsite electricity needs and incidental resale to the grid. Limit utility-scale solar operations to areas adjacent to the County’s existing electrical*

substations as delineated in the Zoning Ordinance as of January 16, 2024. Consider future regulations to allow community-scale solar on a limited basis and in a manner that does not consume important farmland or open space.

- Strategy 5.** Continue to support and promote Land Use Taxation, Agricultural & Forestal District (AFD), and Conservation Easement programs. ~~Develop~~ *Maintain* outreach and social media tools to inform the public of the benefits of these programs and explain their value to the community as a whole.
- Strategy 6.** Continue to support efforts to place prime farmland and large agricultural parcels into permanent conservation easement including leveraging grants with local funds to purchase dwelling unit rights as a means of permanently preserving lands for agriculture.
- Strategy 7.** Support efforts to permanently preserve lands that are located adjacent to the corporate boundaries of Berryville and Boyce that contain significant natural, historical or cultural resources; have unique scenic beauty; or possess prime farmland characteristics. Consider providing flexibility for these properties to be used as passive recreational parks, educational resources, scenic greenways, or similar uses as an amenity for nearby residents.
- Strategy 8.** Continue to support programs that help mitigate adverse impacts on the County’s streams and waterways, e.g., stream fencing and streambank restoration projects. Continue partnering with agencies such as the Lord Fairfax Soil & Water Conservation District and the Natural Resources Conservation Service, and pursue grant opportunities in support of these programs.
- Strategy 9.** ~~Conduct periodic reviews of~~ *Evaluate* zoning regulations to balance the needs of the agricultural community with ensuring that potential impacts such as traffic safety, agricultural waste/runoff, and other environmental concerns are effectively addressed.

GOAL 2 – Ensure that agribusinesses, agritourism activities, and industrial-scale agriculture are regulated to mitigate impacts to surrounding rural lands.

- Strategy 1.** Encourage ~~the development of businesses~~ *compatible agribusinesses* that provide products and services to support the agricultural community. Explore the feasibility of establishing or attracting agricultural support facilities for production and sales of agricultural products ~~such as farm markets, co-ops, canneries, and farm equipment sales/service businesses.~~
- Strategy 2.** Support *compatible* non-traditional agricultural enterprises *to support traditional farming operations* including but not limited to ~~equine, specialty growers, local food/~~pick-your-own *operations*, farm-to-table *events*, and agritourism *activities*.

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- Strategy 3.** Ensure that non-traditional agricultural activities do not significantly expand beyond the scope of *traditional* agriculture and the intent of the Right to Farm Act. Maintain dividing lines by designating special uses or prohibiting uses that exceed the scope of agriculture.
- Strategy 4.** *Maintain and strengthen regulations and processes to ensure that agritourism businesses which primarily serve the public and grow crops or raise livestock as secondary uses do not adversely impact the health, safety, or general welfare of the public.*
- Strategy 5.** Solicit input from the agricultural community on Zoning Ordinance text amendments that propose commercial or public assembly activities in conjunction with agricultural operations.
- Strategy 6.** Allow intensive livestock facilities as required by State law, ensuring that site development regulations mitigate potential adverse environmental impacts on surrounding properties and waterways.
- Strategy 7.** *Industrial-scale agriculture – controlled-environment agriculture within a fully-enclosed, climate-controlled building which relies on year-round water usage as opposed to seasonal irrigation – is not considered to be by-right agriculture and should not be allowed in the AOC and FOC Districts.*

GOAL 3 – Provide support to the agricultural community.

- Strategy 1.** Encourage ~~agricultural ventures~~ *agricultural operations* of all sizes whether very large, mid-range, or small farms. Ensure that the County's land use policies and regulations are consistent with the current and future needs of the agricultural community.
- Strategy 2.** ~~Appoint a County advisory committee to serve as a forum~~ *Provide opportunities* for cooperative discussion of issues affecting the agricultural community and to ~~provide~~ *offer* recommendations to the Board of Supervisors on policy issues affecting agriculture. ~~As an alternative, consider assigning this role to an existing County committee such as the Agricultural and Forestal District (AFD) Advisory Committee.~~
- Strategy 3.** Evaluate the ~~creation of a formal agricultural development program that includes assignment of County staffing and financial resources~~ *to address the agricultural community's needs*. Consider ~~establishing the program, at its onset, as part of allocating these resources from~~ the County's ~~Economic Development Department work program with support from the Department of Planning~~ *Planning and Economic Development departments*.

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Strategy 4. Partner with the Virginia Cooperative Extension, local Farm Bureau, and other pertinent agencies and organizations to conduct periodic surveys of the agricultural community to evaluate current and future needs that the County may help to address. Participate in regional agricultural economic development programs and activities, *and* establish partnerships that are consistent with the County’s agricultural goals and policies.

Strategy 5. Utilize the internet, websites, and social media to promote agriculture and Clarke County products.

Strategy 6. *Develop a database of County agricultural operations and support businesses. Compile agricultural information and resources* in order to effectively *understand and* communicate programs and *to provide* other opportunities to the community and interested stakeholders.

Strategy 7. Consider increasing housing opportunities for farm families and farm workers. Evaluate current zoning and subdivision regulations regarding dwelling unit right usage, lot size requirements, tenant houses, and accessory dwellings (less than 600 square feet).

Objective 3. ~~Facilitate the availability of broadband internet for the agricultural industry, its business activities, and farm residents.~~

~~Strategy (a). Solicit feedback from the agricultural community on ways that they use broadband internet access to streamline and enhance day-to-day operations. Use the feedback in conjunction with efforts to expand broadband availability throughout the County.~~

~~Strategy (a). Ensure that marketing/outreach initiatives and County agricultural projects and programs consider the diverse needs and involve all facets of the agricultural industry equally.~~

Objective 4. ~~Take a proactive role to ensure that the potential environmental impacts of agriculture are mitigated and that the interests of future development do not collide with the interests of the agricultural community.~~

Objective 2. ~~Ensure that the County's economic development program includes projects that promote the County's agricultural industry.~~

~~Strategy (a). Develop partnerships and resources to link existing farmers and agricultural-related business owners with emerging farmers, agricultural entrepreneurs, landowners, and the general public.~~

~~Strategy (b). Consider developing regulations for landowners to create farmland of various sizes for purchase or lease. Establish design criteria to ensure that the regulations are not used to create large residential lots that are not farmed.~~

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~~Strategy (d).— Support agricultural related uses as a means of preserving the character and historic value of large homesteads and their associated lands.~~

~~Strategy (e).— Ensure that future updates of the County Comprehensive Plan and relevant component plans are coordinated with the current goals, objectives and strategies of the Agricultural Land Plan.~~

~~Strategy (b).— Prevent the expansion of the Rural Residential (RR) zoning district beyond the boundaries of the County’s unincorporated villages and existing residential communities. Prevent the expansion of commercial zoning districts beyond the boundaries of designated business intersections unless supported by the applicable business intersection area plan.~~

B. Protection and Preservation of the County’s Mountain Areas

GOAL 1 – Limit the impacts of development activity in the Mountain Areas.

Strategy 1. *Maintain and periodically evaluate Zoning and Subdivision Ordinance regulations that protect environmentally and topographically sensitive mountain areas from the effects of development.*

Strategy 2. *Limit approval of traffic-generating commercial uses and special events on private roads on the mountain, in particular those private roads which do not conform to the private access easement design requirements in the Subdivision Ordinance.*

Strategy 3. *Strictly apply the County’s land use regulations to any new or expanding uses on lands in adjacent jurisdictions that will rely on lands in Clarke County to any degree for ingress/egress, parking, or any other development component.*

GOAL 2 – Encourage the preservation of mountain lands.

Strategy 1. *Develop outreach efforts to encourage mountain area landowners to place their properties in permanent conservation easement or participate in the County’s Agricultural and Forestal District (AFD) program.*

GOAL 3 – Prevent adverse impacts from the public’s access to the mountain area’s recreational resources.

Strategy 1. *Mountain areas should be enjoyed in their most natural state. Limit creation of new or expansion of existing public recreational opportunities in the mountain areas to low-impact, passive recreation such as unimproved walking trails and passive-use spaces. Discourage recreational uses that require significant*

improvements to roads and parking or would require excessive tree clearing and/or land disturbance.

Strategy 2. *Evaluate the impacts of improving or expanding parking areas and access points to recreational resources to ensure that the improvements will accommodate the anticipated increase in visitors. Impacts to be evaluated include increased traffic and possible need for more parking as a result of increased visitor volume, and adverse impacts to nearby property owners.*

C. Millwood Goals and Strategies

Overview – Include Millwood plan area map and explain how the strategies apply to the plan area

GOAL 1 -- Preserve the form and scale of buildings and encourage compatible uses.

Strategy 1

Consider developing zoning regulations specifically for Millwood to ensure compatible current and future uses and structures.

Strategy 2

Prohibit the rezoning of lots zoned Agricultural-Open Space-Conservation (AOC) located within the Plan Area to RR or CN. Ensure that special uses approved on these AOC-zoned properties – particularly those lots located in whole or in part within the village core – mitigate adverse impacts to existing uses on adjoining and nearby properties within or adjacent to the plan area.

Strategy 3

The preferred future use of Carter Hall *and other large lots in the Millwood Plan Area* shall be for residential *uses consistent with sliding-scale zoning* and/or agricultural purposes. Proposals for other future uses should only be considered which demonstrate minimal impact on village traffic and the village’s public water system and existing private wells, and that do not result in significant degradation of natural resources. Public sewer shall not be provided to the property.

Strategy 4

Discourage expansion of the village’s limited public water and sewer system specifically to increase capacity for future development in the village.

Strategy 5

Development within Millwood’s commercial historic district should be limited to continuation of existing uses and adaptive reuse of existing structures.

GOAL 2 -- Protect Millwood’s natural and historic resources.

Strategy 1

Minimize stormwater and pollution impacts to Spout Run.

Strategy 2

Ensure that transportation infrastructure projects preserve the village’s historic streetscape including trees, stone walls, fences, and similar features.

Strategy 3

Prohibit unnecessary light pollution and protect the peace and quiet of the village by discouraging noise-generating activities and uses.

Strategy 4

Protect and preserve historic structures within the plan area including the Burwell-Morgan Mill. Encourage renovation of structures located outside the Historic Overlay zoning district (H) in a manner that is consistent with the form and character of the village. Where infeasible to renovate, promote the benefits of “mothballing” structures to limit demolition by neglect.

Strategy 5

Encourage the establishment of conservation easements on adjacent and nearby AOC-zoned properties.

GOAL 3 -- Ensure the safe movement of vehicles and pedestrians through the village.

Strategy 1

Recognizing that Va. Route 255 is a State primary highway, encourage implementation of appropriate traffic calming measures to ensure compliance with posted speed limits.

Strategy 2

Evaluate pedestrian accommodations which do not adversely impact structures and properties in the village.

Strategy 3

Explore ways to facilitate off-street parking options to limit congestion in the village’s commercial historic district.

D. White Post Village Goals and Strategies

Overview – Include Millwood plan area map and explain how the strategies apply to the plan area

GOAL 1 -- Preserve the form and scale of buildings and encourage compatible uses.

Strategy 1

Consider developing zoning regulations specifically for White Post to ensure compatible current and future uses and structures.

Strategy 2

Prohibit the rezoning of lots zoned Agricultural-Open Space-Conservation (AOC) located within the Plan Area to RR or CN. Ensure that special uses approved on these AOC-zoned properties – particularly those lots located in whole or in part within the village core – mitigate adverse impacts to existing uses on adjoining and nearby village properties.

Strategy 3

Discourage expansion of the public water system specifically to increase capacity for future development in the village. Any future extension of public sewer service to the village should be limited only to address widespread failures of onsite sewage disposal systems.

GOAL 2 -- Protect White Post’s character and historic resources.

Strategy 1

Evaluate historic district design guidelines for residential uses in White Post that balance the need for historic preservation with affordability and provision of common-sense options for property owners.

Strategy 2

Ensure that transportation infrastructure projects respect the village’s scale and historic resources including the “White Post” located at the intersection of Berrys Ferry Road and White Post Road.

Strategy 3

Avoid light pollution and protect the peace and quiet of the village by discouraging noise-generating activities and uses.

Strategy 4

Encourage renovation of structures located outside the Historic Overlay zoning district (H) in a manner that is consistent with the form and character of the village. Where infeasible to renovate, promote the benefits of “mothballing” structures to limit demolition by neglect.

GOAL 3 -- Support compatible, neighborhood-scale business uses.

Strategy 1

Evaluate the creation of a new zoning district for White Post that would allow for a mix of Rural Residential and Neighborhood Commercial uses in appropriate locations.

Strategy 2

Development of new and expansion of existing businesses shall minimize impacts to adjacent and nearby properties to the greatest extent practicable. Examples of measures should include but not be limited to:

- Additional screening and buffering
- Minimized, dark-sky compliant exterior lighting
- Parking and hardscaping designed to prevent stormwater runoff
- Daytime hours of operation
- No amplified sound discernible from adjacent properties
- Low-impact signage compatible with the village character

Strategy 3

Neighborhood Commercial (CN) zoned properties at the Berrys Ferry Road rail crossing should not be expanded to facilitate future growth and development.

CHAPTER IV – Conclusion

RURAL LANDS PLAN DEVELOPMENT WORK PLAN

Work on the Rural Lands Plan to be conducted by the Comprehensive Plan Committee and Staff. Commissioners not on the Committee will be encouraged to attend and participate in the village workshops

Task 1 – Visioning and Issue Identification

A. Define the purpose of the Rural Lands Plan: COMPLETED

- How do we want this Plan to be used by elected/appointed officials, staff, and County residents?
- How do we avoid overlap and redundancy with the Comprehensive Plan and other component plans?

B. Develop a preliminary list of policy issues to be addressed:

- Policy issues affecting the rural areas in general
- Specific policy issues affecting the AOC/valley areas (“Agricultural Land Plan issues”)
- Specific policy issues affecting the FOC/mountain areas and lands along the Shenandoah River (“Mountain Land Plan issues”)
- Specific policy issues affecting each unincorporated village:
 - Millwood
 - White Post
- Review policy issues with full Commission

C. Solicit preliminary input from citizens via village workshops:

- Explain the goals and purpose of the Rural Lands Plan including what the Plan can and cannot do
- Visioning sessions:
 - Series of prepared statements about the village and whether participants think they are accurate or not
 - How do you envision your village in the next 10-20 years?
- Present the preliminary list of issues identified by the Committee
- Engage attendees both on the Committee’s list of issues and the issues that are most important to them

D. Use workshop feedback to expand, refine, and finalize the issues list

Task 2 – Develop Initial Plan Draft

- Committee to agree on layout for new Plan document
- Staff to develop initial draft of goals, objectives, and policies/action items for Committee review and preliminary approval

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- Staff to develop Initial Plan Draft for Committee review
- Committee approves Final Plan Draft for Commission review

Task 3 – Final Plan Development, Public Hearings, and Adoption

- Full Commission to review Final Plan Draft, make modifications if necessary
- Reach consensus on Final Draft for Public Hearing
- Determine whether to have additional public input workshops before conducting formal public hearing
- Schedule Public Hearing and forward Final Draft to Board of Supervisors with recommendation for adoption

Timeline for Completion

- July-August 2024 – Finalize policy issues, plan village workshops and any other informal outreach initiatives
- September 2024 – Committee to review policy issues and revised work plan with full Commission
- October-November 2024 – Hold village workshops and other outreach initiatives
- November-December 2024 – Incorporate citizen feedback into draft policy issues; finalize policy issues and final plan layout
- December 2024-February 2025 – Staff development of Initial Plan Draft
- March 2025 – Committee review and comment on Initial Plan Draft
- April 2025 – Staff development and Committee review of Final Plan Draft
- May 2025 – Presentation of Final Plan Draft to full Commission, incorporate commissioner comments into Final Draft for Public Hearing
- June 2025 – Commission to schedule public hearing (or conduct additional informal public input workshops)
- July 2025 – Commission’s public hearing on Final Draft and recommendation to the Board of Supervisors (if no additional informal public input workshops are held)
- August 2025 – Present Commission Draft to the Board of Supervisors