



Clarke County Planning Commission

AGENDA – Comprehensive Plan Committee Meeting

Thursday, March 10, 2022 (3:30PM)

Berryville/Clarke County Government Center – Main Meeting Room

1. **Approval of Agenda**
2. **Approval of Minutes – February 17, 2022 Meeting**
3. **Comprehensive Plan Update**
 - A. Review Chapter I Revised Draft
 - B. Review Foreword and Introduction Revised Draft
4. **Scheduling of Next Meeting**
5. **Adjourn**



Clarke County Planning Commission

DRAFT MINUTES – Comprehensive Plan Committee Meeting

Thursday, February 17, 2022 – 10:30AM

Berryville/Clarke County Government Center – Main Meeting Room

| ATTENDANCE: | | | |
|-------------------------------------|----|----------------------------|---|
| Matthew Bass (Board of Supervisors) | ✓E | Bob Glover (Millwood) | ✓ |
| Anne Caldwell (Millwood) | ✓ | Randy Buckley (White Post) | ✓ |
| George L. Ohrstrom, II (Ex Officio) | ✓E | | |

E – Denotes Electronic Participation

NOTE – Chair Ohrstrom participated electronically due to health issues related to the current pandemic. Commissioner Bass participated electronically for personal reasons.

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

CALL TO ORDER: By Mr. Stidham at 10:32AM.

1. Approval of Agenda

Members approved the agenda by consensus as presented by Staff.

2. Approval of Minutes – January 25, 2022 Meeting

Members voted unanimously to approve the January 25, 2022 meeting minutes as presented by Staff.

| Motion to approve January 25, 2022 meeting minutes as presented by Staff: | | | |
|---|----------------|---------|-------------|
| Bass | AYE | Glover | Absent |
| Caldwell | AYE (seconded) | Buckley | AYE (moved) |

3. Comprehensive Plan Update

Discussion, Foreword and Introduction (Initial Draft)

Mr. Stidham led the Committee through a review of the initial draft of the revised Comprehensive Plan’s Foreword and Introduction sections.

On Page 9 of 37, Chair Ohrstrom noted in the third paragraph, last sentence, that the word “general” seems to be odd and Commissioner Bass added that it is redundant. Mr. Stidham asked the Committee whether they would be more comfortable keeping the word “general” or the word “guiding.” Members agreed to keep “guiding” and delete “general.”

On the same page, Commissioner Caldwell said that she loves the quote at the top of the page and Chair Ohrstrom agreed. She also suggested adding a bullet regarding the mountain lands to the bulleted list as it is another unique part of the County. Chair Ohrstrom said you could add it to the third bullet by referencing the mountain areas in a new sentence listing examples of unique

resources. Commissioner Bass suggested referencing the Shenandoah River as well. Chair Ohrstrom also noted that this list does not reference allowing some growth in the rural areas consistent with sliding-scale zoning. Mr. Stidham replied that since we have sliding-scale zoning in place, is it really considered to be “growth” if build out is limited to the finite number of dwelling unit rights (DURs) available in the rural areas. Chair Ohrstrom replied that it is considered growth because it allows for more people to move into the County. Mr. Stidham said that his point is that growth is already managed by sliding-scale zoning. Chair Ohrstrom replied that this is true but that readers of the Comprehensive Plan may not know about sliding-scale zoning or how it works. Mr. Stidham said that he will try to add a second sentence to the first bullet point to reference rural growth consistent with sliding-scale zoning.

Commissioner Caldwell suggesting creating a new bullet for the mountain areas and river to be included after the second bullet. Vice-Chair Buckley asked if this change would require striking “natural” in the third bullet. Commissioner Glover agreed and suggested wording that references topography. Mr. Stidham replied that you would not need to strike “natural” because the third bullet references these unique resources county-wide. Commissioner Glover said that if you have a bullet for the mountain areas and river, you also need a bullet about the valley and karst areas to make sure every area is highlighted.

Mr. Stidham stated that looking at the Comprehensive Plan from a 30,000 foot level, the document contains this bulleted list of guiding principles in the Foreword, a similar list in the Summary Statement of Purpose, and Chapter II’s Goals, Objectives, and Policies as descriptions of the County’s land use philosophy. He asked the Committee whether they think that there are too many different lists that serve a similar purpose. Commissioner Glover said no, adding that it is important to over-communicate these days and that the Foreword may be the only page that some people read. Mr. Stidham noted that this was a point of emphasis in the previous Plan update, that some people may only read the introduction so the language needs to communicate our philosophy in a direct manner. Chair Ohrstrom said that there is no problem having multiple lists so long as they are all well-written.

Commissioner Bass suggested including language in the first paragraph of the Foreword indicating that comprehensive plans are required to be reviewed at least once every five years per the Code of Virginia. Chair Ohrstrom pointed out that this language is included at the beginning of the Introduction section on Page 11 of 37 but he did not have a problem including it in the Foreword as well. Mr. Stidham asked Commissioner Bass how he would structure the language, and he replied that you could add it as a footnote or just a short sentence in the first paragraph. Chair Ohrstrom added that you could say that comprehensive plans are mandated by the State. Mr. Stidham suggested adding the following sentence to the end of the first paragraph, “The Code of Virginia requires every county to adopt a comprehensive plan and to review it at least once every five years.”

Mr. Stidham reviewed the proposed changes to the Summary Statement of Purpose. Regarding the last bullet, Chair Ohrstrom suggested adding “to address those needs” at the end of the sentence to explain the purpose for the solutions. Members agreed with the change. Mr. Stidham said that this sentence still seems clunky and asked members what they thought about replacing “sectors of the community” with “stakeholders.” Commissioner Glover said that you

could take out “all sectors of” so it would say “participation from the community.” Mr. Stidham asked whether “stakeholders” is more inclusive because it would include entities that are not businesses or residents who make up the community. Commissioner Caldwell said that “stakeholders” has the connotation of referencing landowners and Commissioner Glover added that it is a word that he does not trust. Mr. Camp noted that the word makes sense to the Commission and Staff but not always to the general public. Commissioner Caldwell said that “community” is more intuitively inclusive. Mr. Stidham suggested going with Commissioner Glover’s language and adding the word “active” before “participation” to strengthen the message. Chair Ohrstrom noted that the second “community” should be deleted. Mr. Stidham said that he would make these changes.

Mr. Stidham reviewed the changes to the Introduction section and members had no comments or edits to this section.

Mr. Stidham reviewed the changes to the Form and Function of the Clarke County Comprehensive Plan section, noting that the Committee previously reviewed the changes to the component plan descriptions at an earlier meeting. On Page 13 of 37, Chair Ohrstrom suggested replacing the word “several” in the sentence on Chapter II with the word “many.” Commissioner Bass suggested just deleting the word “several” and members agreed.

Regarding the summaries of the component plans, Commissioner Caldwell said that in the Transportation Plan description on Page 16 of 37, in the third sentence the use of the word “clear” is a value statement that is not used anywhere else in the Plan. Mr. Stidham suggested replacing “provides a clear statement of” with the word “describes.” Commissioner Caldwell agreed with this change. Commissioner Bass referenced the Historic Resources Plan description and asked about the use of the term “action-oriented component plan.” Mr. Stidham said that he used this term to describe how the recommendations in that plan and in others are structured, noting that the Historic Resources Plan recommendations are mostly a list of action items to complete tasks or projects. Commissioner Bass suggested adding language to explain what an action-oriented plan is. Mr. Stidham replied that he would add this to Page 14 where Chapter III is first discussed. Regarding the Recreation Plan description, Chair Ohrstrom asked if we needed to include the word “grow” in reference to the County’s recreational resources when we are already saying that we are going to “promote” the resources. Commissioner Bass said to him they mean two different things -- that “promote” means to advertise the resource and “grow” means to add or expand the resource. Mr. Stidham asked if there is a difference between “grow” and “enhance.” Commissioner Bass replied yes and Commissioner Glover said that “enhance” can mean to improve what you already have.

Under “Process for Amending the Comprehensive Plan” at the top of Page 18 of 37, Chair Ohrstrom suggested referencing the “Virginia General Assembly” as some readers may not know what the General Assembly is.

Mr. Stidham reviewed the new “Citizen Participation in the Planning Process” section that was created from the current Comprehensive Plan objective with the same name. Commissioner Bass recommended noting that the members of the Commission and Board of Supervisors are also citizens.

Mr. Stidham reviewed the new “Scope of the Current Plan Revision” section. Commissioner Caldwell asked about the reference to determining whether to incorporate data from the Cost of Community Services Study into the Comprehensive Plan. Chair Ohrstrom replied that he thinks it would be a good idea to include data from the Study but he is not sure that everyone knows what the Study is. He added that it is a very useful tool because it can be used to determine whether a development project would cost the County more than it can afford. He said that the Study identifies different types of development and the revenue they generate versus the cost to the county to serve. Mr. Stidham noted that the list is a verbatim copy of the list that was adopted in the 2019 five-year review resolution and if new language is added to it, the section would have to be rewritten. Commissioner Caldwell recommended including a footnote. Mr. Stidham also said that he had trouble determining which data could be included in the revised Comprehensive Plan and whether including data would be a help or a hindrance. He added that a cost of community services study could be used to evaluate development proposals but the study would have to be updated on an annual basis to include the most current data in order to make it legally defensible. In other words, a development proposal’s impacts would be reviewed at the point in time in which the application is filed against the County’s cost to serve that development at that same point in time. Mr. Stidham also noted that there are various recommendations throughout the Comprehensive Plan that can be used to make similar arguments as factors in evaluating a development proposal. Chair Ohrstrom added that it would be expensive to update the Cost of Community Services Study each year.

Mr. Stidham said that he will work on a revised draft for the Committee’s review.

Discussion, Public Infrastructure and Services section (Rough Draft)

Mr. Stidham reviewed the new Public Infrastructure and Services section to be included in Chapter I. He said that it is not ready for wordsmithing as it is a rough draft but wanted to get the Committee’s initial comments on this new section. He noted that he wanted to describe the different public services and infrastructure elements in a very general fashion and not include a lot of detail on the nuts and bolts of how the services are operated. He then provided an overview of the new section.

Regarding the list of County departments on the bottom of Page 32 of 37, Chair Ohrstrom said that County Administration and the Department of Planning should be at the top of the list. Mr. Stidham replied that County Administration is referenced into the lead paragraph and Chair Ohrstrom replied that it should also be included in the list. Commissioner Bass noted that the names of the departments should be consistent. Mr. Stidham replied that some departments have official names and others do not. Commissioner Caldwell noted in the first line under General Government that the Board of Supervisors serves four-year terms and not five-year terms. At the top of the same page, Vice-Chair Buckley noted reference to the “Camp 7” property and said that most people would not know what this means. Mr. Stidham recommended changing it to “State-Owned” as it previously included both the Virginia Department of Corrections and Virginia Department of Transportation.

Regarding the Animal Control section at the top of Page 34 of 37, Chair Ohrstrom said that the description of the Animal Shelter is incorrect. He added that the Shelter is managed by the

County but is owned by the Humane Foundation. He also said that “American Humane member” should be deleted. Mr. Stidham noted these changes.

On Page 33 of 37, Commissioner Glover said that “Town of Berryville” should be preceded by “Law Enforcement” to be consistent with the title for the County Sheriff’s Office. He also noted that the Berryville Police Department description talks about the different programs they do and instead should be written more like the Sheriff’s Office description. Mr. Stidham noted that the description comes from their website.

On Page 34 of 37, Chair Ohrstrom noted under “Fire, Rescue, and Emergency Management” in the paragraph after the bulleted list, last line, the word “fire” should be included before “suppression.”

On Page 33 of 37 under “Public Safety Communications,” Commissioner Glover said that the Emergency Communications Center should be listed as a County facility. Mr. Stidham replied that they provide dispatch services for both the Town and the County. He noted that he could add to the end of the first sentence that dispatch is done for calls in the Towns of Berryville and Boyce and Countywide.

On Page 34 of 37, Commissioner Glover said that he does not think of the Blue Ridge Volunteer Fire and Rescue Company as being located in Shenandoah Retreat. Mr. Stidham said that he included the description as being near the Retreat because the mailing address for the Company is Bluemont. Vice-Chair Buckley said that he prefers “adjacent to” Shenandoah Retreat but definitely would not say that it is in the Retreat because that may sound like the Company does not serve other areas.

On Page 35 of 37, Chair Ohrstrom and Commissioner Bass noted a missing “a” in the first line of the Kohn property description between “is” and “currently.”

On Page 36 of 37, Chair Ohrstrom noted in the description of the Department of Social Services, fourth line, that “Protect” should be “Protective.” Commissioner Caldwell noted that the Northwestern Community Services is now offering their services in the County and could also be added to this section. Commissioner Glover noted at the bottom of the page that the five-member Joint Administrative Services board is an appointed board. Mr. Stidham said that he would make these changes.

On Page 37 of 37, Commissioner Caldwell suggested defining public roads in the first sentence of the Transportation section as being both primary and secondary roads. Vice-Chair Buckley suggested labeling U.S. 340 as Buckmarsh Street and Va. Route 7 as Main Street for clarity purposes. Commissioner Glover and Vice-Chair Buckley suggested adding homeowners’ associations (HOAs) as entities that can be responsible for maintaining private roads. Mr. Stidham replied that he thought about including HOAs but noted that not all communities have road maintenance agreements set up to be managed by an HOA.

Distribution of Chapter I Revised Draft (for review at next meeting)

Mr. Camp distributed the revised draft of Chapter I. He noted that changes discussed at the last meeting have been incorporated but that Staff is still working to finalize all of the maps and one table. He said this draft is being distributed so the Committee will have extra time to review for discussion at the next meeting.

Mr. Stidham stated that if he can get the Public Infrastructure and Services section finalized and Mr. Camp is able to get the last table and maps finalized, the Committee could potentially finalize Chapter I at the next meeting. The last remaining item for the Committee would be to review a complete revised draft and decide whether to forward it to the full Commission for review.

4. Scheduling of Next Meeting

Members agreed to schedule the next meeting for Thursday, March 10 at 3:30PM.

ADJOURN: Meeting was adjourned by consensus at 11:40AM.

Brandon Stidham, Clerk



Clarke County Planning Department
101 Chalmers Court, Suite B
Berryville, Virginia 22611
(540) 955-5132

TO: Comprehensive Plan Committee (Planning Commission)

FROM: Jeremy Camp, Senior Planner/Zoning Administrator

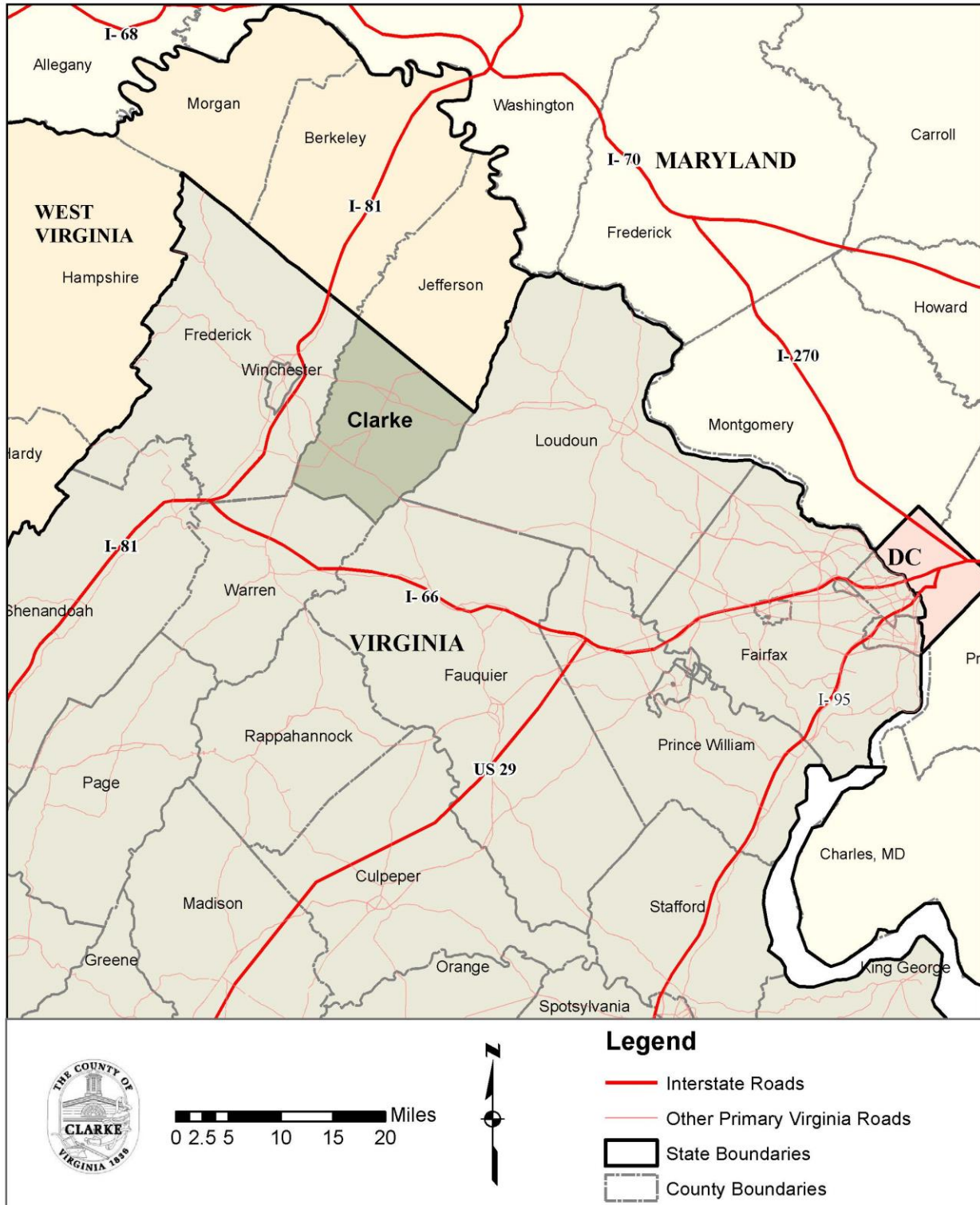
SUBJECT: Updated Pages – Chapter 1 of the Comprehensive Plan

DATE: March 2, 2022

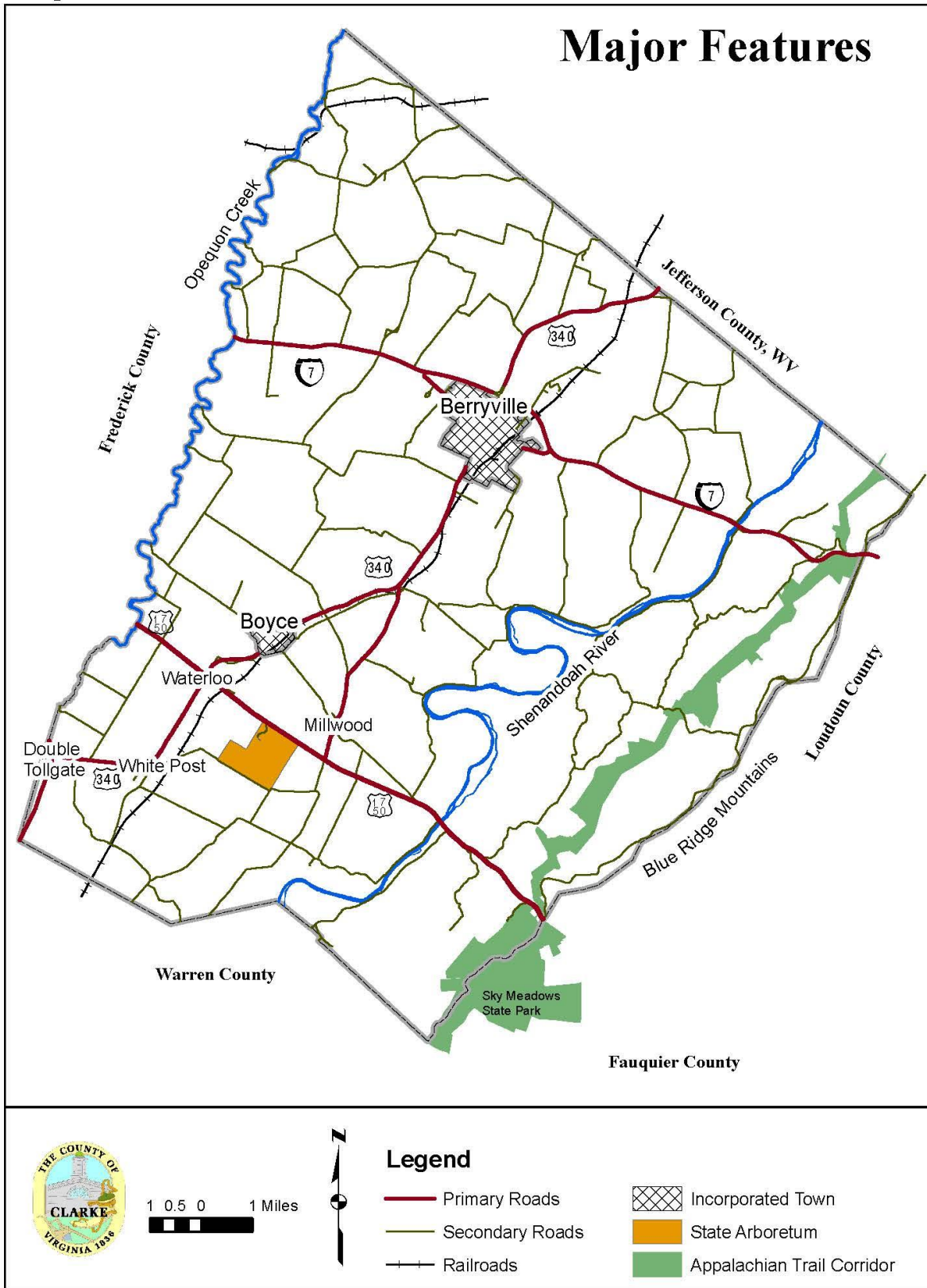
The following attached pages are updates to the DRAFT update to chapter 1 of the Comprehensive Plan. Changes were made to 3 maps at the request of the Comprehensive Plan Committee. Table 17 was completed by Staff and is also included.

- I-2, Map 1 *color added, detail of roads improved, legend edited*
- I-3, Map 2 *color added, labeling improved, legend edited, features added/removed*
- I-15, Map 5 *labeling changed, features added, legend edited*
- I-42, Table 17 *completed by Staff*

Map 1



Map 2



Map 5

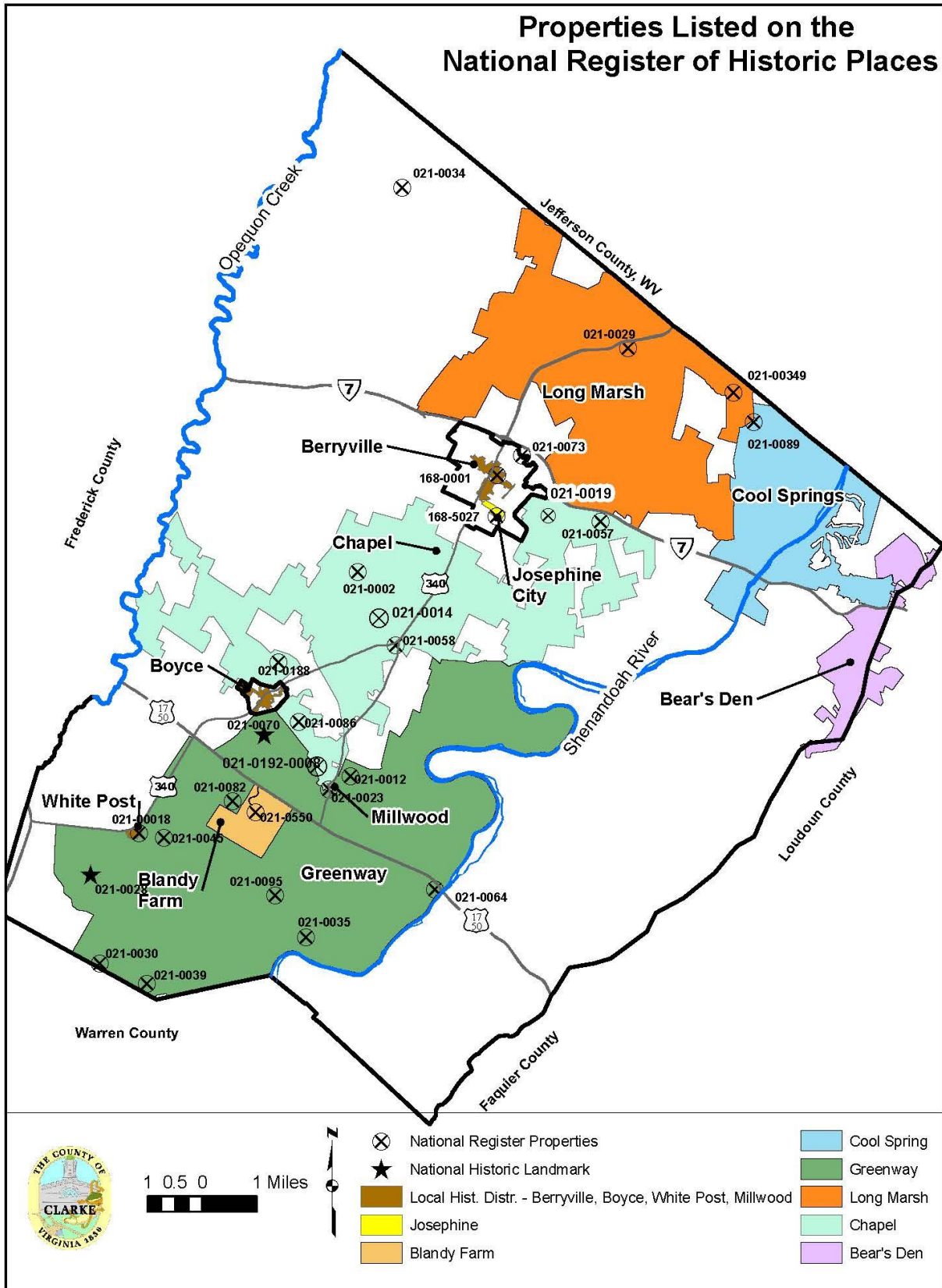


TABLE 17 – Current Land Use

| LAND USE TYPES | Berryville (acres/%) | Boyce (acres/%) | County East (acres/%) | County West (acres/%) | Total (acres/%) |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------|
| Urban Residential* | | | | | |
| With Dwellings | 677/0.6% | 117/0.1% | | | 794/0.7% |
| Without Dwellings | 233/0.2% | 610/0.05% | | | 294/0.3% |
| Suburban Residential** | | | | | |
| With Dwellings | | | 2,324/2.0% | 3,657/3.2% | 5,981/5.2% |
| Without Dwellings | | | 1,035/0.9% | 675/0.6% | 1,710/1.5% |
| Rural Residential*** | | | | | |
| With Dwellings | | | 3,006/2.6% | 4,836/4.2% | 7,842/6.9% |
| Without Dwellings | | | 1,069/0.9% | 1,300/1.1% | 2,369/2.1% |
| Agricultural | | | | | |
| 20 to <100 acre parcels | | | 10,046/8.8% | 29,552/25.9% | 39,598/34.7% |
| 100+ acre parcels | | | 7,229/6.3% | 40,925/35.9% | 48,154/42.2% |
| Other | | | | | |
| Govt. parcels | | | 2,280/2.0% | 1,095/1.0% | 3,375/3.0% |
| Commercial**** | | | 6/0.005% | 167/0.1% | 173/0.2% |
| Shenandoah River | | | | | 946/0.8% |
| Roads | | | | | 2,396/2.1% |

Sources: Clarke County GIS and Commissioner of the Revenue records

Note: Parcels located in the County may be included in more than one use type. Land use types are derived from designations used by the Commissioner of the Revenue.

* Urban Residential – Limited to parcels located in the Towns of Berryville and Boyce

** Suburban Residential – Limited to parcels located in the County and less than 6 acres in size

*** Rural Residential – Limited to parcels located in the County and between 6 and 20 acres in size

****This item does not include commercial acreage located within the Towns of Berryville and Boyce (see Table 18)

Total acreage of County – 114,103 (source GIS)

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FOR COMMITTEE REVIEW 3-10-2022

*“A plan serves a public body much as a promise serves an individual.
If we make a promise, others expect that we will honor it with our actions.”¹*

FOREWORD

The Comprehensive Plan maps the future of land use in Clarke County. This long-range Plan captures the County’s vision, projects the necessary resources to make this vision happen, and ~~develops the planning tools (guidelines and strategies)~~ *provides strategies and recommendations* to make the vision a successful reality. Such long-range planning, as set out in the Comprehensive Plan, anticipates future impacts of land use choices, and guides all present and future decisions regarding land use. *The Code of Virginia requires every county to adopt a comprehensive plan and to review it at least once every five years to determine whether it needs to be updated.*

The purpose of this plan is to guide land-use decisions, both public and private, as they relate to the specific goals of the County. The Plan is for the citizens of the County and, for this reason, considers many diverse interests. It cannot satisfy every citizen's particular interest but does provide a mechanism for the protection of the health, safety, and welfare of all County citizens. Most importantly, it provides an outline for future decisions on land use, natural resource protection, capital improvements, and economic growth while attempting to balance the community’s diverse interests.

Clarke County adopted its initial Comprehensive Plan on June 15, 1974. The Plan ~~has been~~ *was* updated ~~several times over the years in August 1974, September 1980, March 1988, August 1994, March 2001, and March 2007, most recently in March 2014. Revised guidance and innovations were added with each update, but the following~~ *general* guiding principles ~~of the 2007 Plan were have remained consistent:~~

- *Manage* ~~Managing~~ residential *and business* growth *in designated areas where it can be supported by public infrastructure in a fiscally-responsible manner.*
- *Allow low-density residential growth in rural areas consistent with the County’s sliding-scale zoning system.*
- *Ensure* *the prosperity of agriculture by* protecting *farmland* ~~agricultural land from development pressures and supporting the right to farm.~~
- *Develop and refine strategies and regulatory approaches to account for the challenges of developing in County’s karst terrain and potential for groundwater contamination.*
- *Recognize that the County’s mountain areas and the Shenandoah River have distinctive attributes from the valley requiring different planning and regulatory approaches to preserve the natural beauty and ecology of these areas.*
- *Protect* ~~Protecting~~ *the County’s unique natural* ~~environmental, historical,~~ and cultural resources.

¹ Charles Hoch, Linda C. Dalton, and Frank So, eds.
The Practice of Local Government Planning, 3rd Edition
Washington, DC: International City/County Management Association, 2000, p. 32.

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- **Encourage encouraging compatible** business activity to broaden the tax base, particularly businesses related to agriculture.

~~These principles remain the focus of this updated Plan and its Implementing Component Plans.~~

~~Clarke County has many cultural, historical, and natural attributes that make it an attractive place in which to live. This Comprehensive Plan is designed to protect and enhance attributes that contribute to the rural and agricultural character of the County, while it accommodates additional people and businesses primarily in the designated growth areas.~~

This Comprehensive Plan is a document first and foremost for the citizens of Clarke County. It is designed to protect and enhance the quality of life and sense of community valued by the people who have chosen to live and work here.

SUMMARY STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

Clarke County places tremendous value on its unique natural and historic resources and its agrarian economy. This rural character makes the County an exceptional place to live, work, and play. ~~The This~~ Comprehensive Plan contains goals, objectives, and policy statements that are designed to ensure that these elements are maintained and protected. ~~Furthermore, The~~ Plan is drafted and organized to help citizens, business owners, appointed and elected officials, and other stakeholders clearly understand the path that the County has chosen in planning for its future.

This approach is summarized in the points below:

- The County’s conservation easement program, land use taxation, and various planning and zoning tools, **including sliding-scale zoning**, shall continue to be used to protect rural areas, to aid in the vitality of our agricultural industries, and to preserve our natural and historic resources.
- Land use decision-making shall emphasize **managed directed, controlled** growth on a rural, small-town scale in designated areas where public infrastructure can be efficiently provided. These areas include the Towns of Berryville and Boyce as well as ~~other villages and~~ business intersections **and unincorporated villages as** described in this Plan and its ~~implementing~~ component **plans**.
- The County will focus its resources on infrastructure and economic development projects to serve the designated growth areas. **With the exception of broadband internet service, residents and businesses in rural, unincorporated areas outside of designated growth areas** should continue to expect rural levels of service.

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- To ensure community vitality into the future, the County will explore and consider implementing new and innovative concepts, programs, projects, and regulations that provide diverse housing options, *compatible* ~~context-sensitive~~ economic development, and *cost-effective* ~~efficient~~ public infrastructure in designated growth areas.
- The County shall strive to support concepts, programs, projects, and regulations that *protect natural resources from significant degradation* ~~ensure environmental sustainability~~. Clarke County's fundamental goal is to protect our natural resources so that we may pass them on to future generations. We seek to accomplish this through efforts that manage surface water and groundwater, protect and restore stream and river corridors, and preserve the integrity of our natural environment.
- The County shall also strive to support concepts, programs, projects, and regulations that ensure economic sustainability *in a fiscally-responsible manner consistent with its land-use philosophy*. Public and private sector investments in business, housing, and infrastructure should be economically viable, environmentally sound, and socially responsible to the community's objectives as set forth in this Plan. Achieving this goal requires *active* participation from *all-sectors-of* the community, both to determine *community* needs and to identify and implement innovative and appropriate solutions *to address those needs*.

INTRODUCTION

Comprehensive Plans Generally

The Comprehensive Plan *is a combines* long-range planning *document that provides guidance with guidelines* for making *tomorrow's land use and policy* decisions. *The Plan* ~~is~~ for the *County's* citizens, *business owners, and stakeholders of the County* and thus considers many diverse interests. Most important, it provides an outline for future land-use decisions that balance diverse interests and are based upon the goals, objectives, and policies of the County.

The Comprehensive Plan provides a vision for how a community should grow in the future. It is typically long-range and forward-looking, addressing a wide range of issues and questions relating to land use, community facilities, infrastructure, preservation, community character, and economic development among other topics. It is important to understand that the Comprehensive Plan is an adopted guideline and not a law or regulatory tool. The Plan provides specific recommendations on land use tools that should be implemented, *maintained, or enhanced* to further the Plan's Goals, Objectives, and Policies. These tools can come in the form of regulations, such as changes to the County Code or Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances. They can also come in the form of more detailed plans such as the *implementing component plans*, or in programs and processes such as a Capital Improvement Planning program. Implementing the Plan's recommendations via these tools is the most critical element to ensure that the Plan's strategies are followed.

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The County's Planning Commission is charged with preparing the plan and presenting it to the Board of Supervisors for consideration. The Code of Virginia requires local jurisdictions to adopt comprehensive plans in accordance with §15.2-2223:

The local planning commission shall prepare and recommend a comprehensive plan for the physical development of the territory within its jurisdiction and every governing body shall adopt a comprehensive plan for the territory under its jurisdiction.

In the preparation of a comprehensive plan, the commission shall make careful and comprehensive surveys and studies of the existing conditions and trends of growth, and of the probable future requirements of its territory and inhabitants. The comprehensive plan shall be made with the purpose of guiding and accomplishing a coordinated, adjusted and harmonious development of the territory which will, in accordance with present and probable future needs and resources, best promote the health, safety, morals, order, convenience, prosperity and general welfare of the inhabitants, including the elderly and persons with disabilities.

The comprehensive plan shall be general in nature, in that it shall designate the general or approximate location, character, and extent of each feature, including any road improvement and any transportation improvement, shown on the plan and shall indicate where existing lands or facilities are proposed to be extended, widened, removed, relocated, vacated, narrowed, abandoned, or changed in use as the case may be.

~~Most recently, the General Assembly mandated that comprehensive plans include transportation plans with new requirements including coordination with the Statewide Transportation Plan, Six Year Improvement Program, and route locations selected by the Commonwealth Transportation Board. The transportation plan components must also be provided to the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) to be reviewed for consistency with the aforementioned elements before the plan is adopted by the locality. Urban development areas (UDAs), a previously mandated component for certain jurisdictions, have now been made optional by the General Assembly.~~

Form and Function of the Clarke County Comprehensive Plan

The Comprehensive Plan consists of two components – a base Plan document and various **i**mplementing **c**omponent **p**lans. The base Plan document contains background information on the County's history and characteristics, demographic and statistical information, and general goals, objectives and policies. The **i**mplementing **c**omponent **p**lans are separate specialized documents that provide detailed implementation strategies on specific topic areas outlined in the base Plan.

Code of Virginia §15.2-2230 requires planning commissions to review their comprehensive plans at least once every five years in order to determine whether it is advisable to make changes to the plan. ***This requirement applies to the County's Comprehensive Plan and to each of the component plans as they are also considered to be part of the Comprehensive Plan. The current Comprehensive Plan was adopted in March 2014 and the Planning Commission adopted a resolution in January 2019 to initiate a review and update of the Plan. There is no requirement in the Code of Virginia regarding when a comprehensive plan review must be***

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completed.

~~The Planning Commission began their review and update of the 2007 Plan in Summer 2012 with the adoption of a work plan that designated the Commission as a “committee of the whole” for the review of the base Plan document. Upon the adoption of the revised base Plan document, attention will be turned to the review and update of the Implementing Component Plans along with the drafting of any new Component Plans recommended in the revised base Plan document. To ensure the efficient review of the Component Plans, the use of subcommittees is recommended so that multiple Component Plans can be worked on in tandem.~~

The base Plan document consists of three Chapters – General Information (Chapter I); Goals, Objectives, and Policies (Chapter II), and Implementing Components (Chapter III). ~~The revised Plan document includes new appendices that include detailed background information on the County and additional statistical information—some of which were moved from other sections in the 2007 Plan to make the Plan more readable. Chapter I contains factual information about the County including its history and historic resources, its unique environmental resources and characteristics, and a summary of the County’s approach to growth management. Chapter I also contains statistical information of the County’s population and growth trends, housing patterns, and land use.~~

Goals, Objectives, and Policies

*Chapter II contains the Plan’s guidance language, recommendations, and implementation strategies addressing **several** key topic areas including:*

- *Agriculture*
- *Mountain resources*
- *Natural resources*
- *Historic resources*
- *Conservation easements*
- *Outdoor recreational resources*
- *Energy conservation and sustainability*
- *Village plans (Millwood, Pine Grove, White Post)*
- *Designated growth areas for development*
- *Economic development*
- *Public infrastructure, capital improvement planning, and fiscal responsibility*
- *Transportation*
- *Broadband internet access*

Guidance language is described in a goals/objectives/policies format. Goals of the Comprehensive Plan describe the future of Clarke County in general terms and are the long-term expectations of this Plan. ~~The goals for land use planning in Clarke County are listed below.~~

1. ~~Preserve and protect the agricultural, natural, and open space character of unincorporated areas.~~

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- ~~2. Enhance town, village, and commercial areas through context sensitive design and walkability elements to improve the quality of life for all residents.~~
- ~~3. Encourage and maintain a diverse and viable local economy compatible with the County's size and character.~~
- ~~4. Exercise stewardship over resources so as to reduce the consumption of nonrenewable resources, utilizing renewable energy whenever possible; and foster within the private sector of the County a culture of resource conservation.~~
- ~~5. Provide for the economical delivery of necessary public services consistent with these goals.~~

Objectives ~~are more specific expressions of these goals~~ They describe the County's intended planning actions *in the format of the key topic areas listed above*. Policies are specific statements, *directives, or strategies* for each planning objective. They provide the rationales for land-use decisions and help to guide them. ~~The objectives and policies can be found in Chapter II.~~

Implementing Components of the Comprehensive Plan

~~To achieve these Goals, Objectives, and Policies, implementation of the Clarke County Comprehensive Plan has been divided into seven components pertaining to specific geographic and policy areas. It is through these implementing components that the aspirations of the citizens are achieved and the elements of the Plan are realized.~~

Chapter III contains descriptions of the Comprehensive Plan's implementing component plans. As noted previously, implementing component plans are a series of specialized plans that address specific geographic areas or policy issues. Component plans are developed from various applicable goals, objectives, and strategies in the Comprehensive Plan. Each component plan contains its own goals, objectives and/or strategies (similar in structure to the Comprehensive Plan's Goals, Objectives, and Policies) which go into greater detail on the geographic area or policy issue than can be accomplished succinctly in the Comprehensive Plan. Some component plans are described as "action-oriented," meaning that the component plan's recommendations are primarily composed of specific action items such as tasks or projects to complete or milestones to be achieved.

Component plans are reviewed once every five years and the update processes are informed by the Comprehensive Plan's guidance and by guidelines enumerated in Chapter III. The Chapter also includes a section describing other plans and studies adopted or used by the County noting that while they are not part of the Comprehensive Plan, all such plans and studies must be developed and maintained in accordance with the Comprehensive Plan's guidance.

It should be noted that in conjunction with this Comprehensive Plan revision, the County's Economic Development Strategic Plan and Capital Improvement Plan are to be removed as implementing component plans. These plans require more frequent review and update than

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once every five years and will continue to be maintained in accordance with the Comprehensive Plan's guidance.

Brief summaries of the component plans are provided. These components can be found in Chapter III of the Comprehensive Plan and are briefly described below.

Geographic Area Plans – Rural Areas

Agricultural Land Plan

The purpose of the Agricultural Land Plan is to provide tools and approaches for conserving farmland, and to establish and maintain policies and programs for the long-term prosperity of the County's agricultural industries. It is recommended to be used by property owners, elected and appointed officials, and other interested stakeholders to understand the County's approach to protecting and promoting agriculture. The Agricultural Land Plan's recommendations are applicable to all areas of the County where agricultural operations exist and are allowed by-right.

~~Clarke County has been, and continues to be, a predominantly rural and agricultural environment. Agriculture is the defining characteristic of the County. It is Clarke County's most significant economic, cultural, and historic feature. The preservation of agricultural lands is promoted and encouraged by the Agricultural Land Plan as it seeks to perform the following items:~~

- ~~1. Minimize the impact of nonagricultural residential development.~~
- ~~2. Minimize the size of parcels created for residential purposes in rural areas.~~
- ~~3. Keep residual tracts as large, and therefore as agriculturally viable, as possible.~~
4. Provide for residential growth within the designated growth areas.

Mountain Land Plan

The Mountain Land Plan was developed to address the unique challenges and policy issues facing the County's mountain areas located east of the Shenandoah River. While this rural area allows agriculture by-right, forestal resources predominate and present challenges in protecting scenic viewsheds, wildlife habitats, and ecosystems. The mountainous terrain also presents challenges of protecting surface water resources from erosion and sedimentation. This component plan attempts to address these issues while simultaneously balancing private property rights and the demand for access to the area's natural and scenic resources.

~~The mountain lands of Clarke County to the east of the Shenandoah River constitute approximately one-fourth of the County. The steep slopes and predominantly forested areas create special land-use concerns that require specific land-use planning. The Mountain Land Plan is designed to protect the scenic values, forest resources, surface and groundwater quality as well as wildlife habitats of the area, while allowing well-sited development compatible with these concerns.~~

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Geographic Area Plans – Designated Areas for Growth

Berryville Area Plan

The Berryville ~~area~~ *Annexation Area* has been identified in the Comprehensive Plan as the *County's primary* designated growth area ~~of the County~~. Because *the Town of* Berryville contains the highest concentration of available public facilities and infrastructure, it is the most appropriate place ~~for~~ *to direct future* growth. The Berryville Area Plan provides a guide for the physical growth of ~~that area~~ *the Annexation Area and for the orderly transition of properties from the County to the Town as development occurs*. The ~~overriding primary~~ purpose of this ~~Plan~~ *component plan* is to encourage development of a safe, vibrant, and distinctive small town environment, while maintaining the unique historical character of the community.

Double Tollgate Area Plan

The Double Tollgate Area Plan is one of two Business Intersections Area Plans created under the Comprehensive Plan's guidance. This component plan focuses on the future commercial development of the area immediately surrounding the Double Tollgate unincorporated area at the intersection of U.S. Routes 340 and 522 and Va. Route 277. Strategies are included to address County investment in public infrastructure over time to facilitate highway commercial-scale development at this intersection.

Waterloo Area Plan

The Waterloo Area Plan is the second of two Business Intersections Area Plans and focuses on development issues and challenges at the unincorporated Waterloo area at the intersection of U.S. Routes 340 and 50/17. The Waterloo area is partially served by public water and public sewer, and strategies are included to facilitate the future build-out of highway commercial-scale businesses.

~~Business Intersections Area Plans~~

~~There are two intersections in the County of major arterial highways that are federally designated routes: Waterloo (U.S. Routes 50/17 and 340), and Double Tollgate (U.S. Routes 340 and 522). These intersections are uniquely suited for business activities that require auto or truck access. Area plans are necessary to help ensure that appropriate land is provided for such development, that the necessary utilities are available, and that the character of the development enhances the character of County.~~

Policy Issue Plans

Historic Resources Plan

The Historic Resources Plan is an action-oriented component plan focusing on the promotion and preservation of the County's historic and cultural assets. Clarke County's extensive historic resources play a large part both in attracting tourism and influencing land use decisions. The County encourages historic preservation through state and national programs and has conducted four area surveys to provide documentation of historic properties. *This component plan contains a list of specific goals to be implemented through the County's Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) in furtherance of historic preservation.*

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Recreation Plan

The Recreation Plan is the second of two new component plans developed as recommended by the 2013 Comprehensive Plan’s guidance. This component plan contains specific recommended strategies to protect, promote, grow, and enhance the County’s active and passive recreational resources. Its purpose is to address the community’s recreational needs and outline steps to ensure the continued viability and enhancement of recreational resources for present and future generations.

Transportation Plan

Provision of a safe and efficient transportation network is critical to any community but it is also important to ensure that the community’s transportation needs are compatible and coordinated with the land use philosophy. These needs are not limited to public roads but also extend to bicycle, pedestrian, and commuter networks. The Transportation Plan **describes provides a clear statement** of how the County’s land use philosophy is coordinated with its transportation policies. The Transportation Plan also contains the County’s current list of improvement projects along with planning level cost estimates and statistical information to support the need for each project.

Water Resources Plan

The Water Resources Plan was established to protect the County’s groundwater and surface water resources and to raise attention to the unique challenges of preserving water quality and quantity in a County with significant Karst areas and mountainous terrain. The component plan contains specific goals and strategies to support regulatory protections, to guide land use decision-making, and to encourage ongoing initiatives to further these goals.

~~1) — Groundwater Resources~~

~~Three fourths of the people in Clarke County depend on groundwater as their source of drinking water. Protection of groundwater from pollution is, and has been, of primary importance. The urgent need for protection was vividly demonstrated in 1981, when, because of pollution, the Town of Berryville had to abandon the wells that provided its public water supply. In the early 1990s wells were polluted by benzene in the White Post area and fuel contamination has occurred in Pine Grove and the Shepherd’s Mill Road area. These events underscored the need for protection of groundwater. The Groundwater Resources section addresses related issues, including minimizing contamination from non-point sources, protecting the Prospect Hill Spring water supply (the public water supply serving the businesses and residents in Boyce, Millwood, Waterloo, and White Post), and increasing public understanding of the sensitive nature of limestone geology and its susceptibility to contamination.~~

~~2) — Surface Water Resources~~

~~Surface waters include secondary streams or tributaries, such as the Shenandoah River, the Opequon Creek, and Spout Run (a state designated trout stream). The Surface Water Resources section addresses related issues including surface water contamination from both point and nonpoint sources, off-stream water use, such as domestic supply and irrigation, and recreational uses. Point source pollution comes from specific, identifiable sources. Nonpoint source pollution is caused by many diffuse sources, such as runoff, precipitation, or percolation.~~

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Capital Improvement Plan

~~Public facilities are the infrastructure for Clarke County’s essential services, including education, police and fire protection, social services, parks and recreation, and library services. Because the provision of public facilities can influence when and where development will take place, they are very important growth management tools. The intent of the Capital Improvement Plan is to provide an outline of potential public facility and services needs so the County can review these provisions and maintain adequate levels of services in a timely fashion. Most important, it promotes the effective provision of capital improvements consistent with the goals of the Comprehensive Plan.~~

Process for Amending the Comprehensive Plan

While not recommended, the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors may consider a proposal to amend the Comprehensive Plan or any of the Implementing Components of the Comprehensive Plan outside of the scope of the Plan’s five-year review cycle in accordance with Code of Virginia §15.2-2229 and other relevant sections.

A Comprehensive Plan amendment should demonstrate the following elements: a) preserving open space, farmland, natural beauty, and critical environmental areas, and/or b) improving the quality of life and services and directing development toward designated growth areas.

A Plan Amendment must also meet one of the following criteria.

1. The goals, objectives, or policies of the Comprehensive Plan or an implementing element of the Comprehensive Plan would be more effectively met or implemented, particularly by a concept of land development that was not foreseen by the Plan, if the Plan Amendment were approved.
2. The area surrounding the property in question has changed substantially since the review of the Comprehensive Plan or the applicable element of the Comprehensive Plan.
3. The **Virginia** General Assembly has adopted new requirements affecting comprehensive plans that must be implemented prior to the County’s next five year review schedule.

The importance of the three criteria noted above are critical to ensure that such an amendment addresses a genuine change in conditions of the property, the County, or outside influences affecting the County, or to address a gap in the guidance or State regulatory compliance provided by the Plan and its Component Plans. Piecemeal *plan a* amendments should not be considered solely to address a land use change or other request that is in conflict with the Plan’s recommendations.

Citizen Participation in the Planning Process

Each member of the Board of Supervisors is a citizen that is elected to office by the County’s residents, and each member of the Planning Commission is a citizen that is appointed to serve by the Board of Supervisors. Together with County employees in the Department of Planning, County Administration, and other key departments, these entities are responsible for managing the County’s planning processes.

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The Code of Virginia requires the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors to hold duly advertised public hearings in order to adopt changes to the Comprehensive Plan and implementing component plans. While this minimum requirement ensures that residents, business owners, and other interested stakeholders have at least two opportunities to provide formal comment on proposed changes, additional public input using both formal and informal methods is important in order to produce a well-rounded planning product as well as to facilitate understanding and to achieve buy-in.

Methods to inform and educate the public and to encourage their participation in planning processes include but are not limited to:

- 1. Schedule informal public information sessions prior to conducting required public hearings which allow participants to learn about plan revisions and provide questions and comments to elected and appointed officials and Staff on a one-on-one basis. Sessions can be scheduled in multiple locations around the County as a means of facilitating attendance and participation.*
- 2. Hold workshops or planning charrettes for major revisions or development of new plans that allow citizens and stakeholders to participate in and interact directly with the planning process at its earliest stages.*
- 3. Ensure that information pertaining to the Plan and the planning process is available to citizens in an understandable form, which may include internet postings, newsletters, mailings, informational brochures, and announcements in newspapers and on radio to stimulate citizen involvement.*
- 4. Encourage educational institutions, agencies, clubs, and special interest groups to review and comment on the Comprehensive Plan and implementing components.*
- 5. Following plan adoption, ensure uniform interpretation, administration, enforcement procedures, and staffing levels for the implementing plans, policies, and ordinances of the Comprehensive Plan.*

~~Encourage citizen involvement in the planning process.~~

~~Policies~~

- ~~1. Provide opportunity for citizens to participate in all phases of the planning process.~~
- ~~2. Require that all meetings involving preparing, revising, or amending the Comprehensive Plan be publicly posted and open to the public.~~
- ~~3. Meet or exceed all state requirements for public notice for meetings and freedom of information requests.~~

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Scope of the Current Plan Revision

As noted above, the Planning Commission adopted a resolution in January 2019 to initiate a review of the Clarke County 2013 Comprehensive Plan. This resolution included the following key issues to be addressed during the revision process in addition to any other issues identified by the Commission:

- 1. Evaluate the current Goals, Objectives, and Strategies for relevance and consistency with recent implementing component plan updates. Consider adding or revising language to address any new County priorities such as broadband internet access for residents and businesses.*
- 2. Update demographics and statistical information that have changed since 2013 and for which new data is currently available.*
- 3. Determine whether to incorporate data or other information from the Cost of Community Services Study.²*
- 4. Update implementing component plan descriptions in Chapter III to reflect recent updates of these Plans.*
- 5. Evaluate whether to conduct a comprehensive review and update of the Mountain Land Plan and, if so, develop objectives and strategies that will inform the update process.*
- 6. Determine whether to retain reference to the Capital Improvement Plan as an implementing component plan and make changes to the applicable objectives and strategies as necessary.*

*In addition to addressing these and other issues, All demographic information has been updated in Chapter I using a variety of primary sources including ~~to include the data provided in the 2020 2010 US Census, 2019 American Community Survey, as well as current and projected information provided by the~~ University of Virginia’s Weldon-Cooper Center, ~~and the~~ Virginia Employment Commission (VEC), *West Virginia University’s Bureau of Business and Economic Research, US Bureau of Labor Statistics, and Clarke County Planning Department records.**

Work on the Comprehensive Plan revision was assigned to the Commission’s Comprehensive Plan Committee. Because of delays due to work on other planning projects and the COVID pandemic, the Committee and Staff were not able to begin work until June 2020. A final draft was completed and presented to the full Commission for final review in [INSERT DATE].

² The Cost of Community Services Study (developed in 2018 by the University of Virginia’s Weldon-Cooper Center) examines the cost to the County of providing public infrastructure and services to the various land-uses in the County.