

APPENDIX A ADMINISTRATION

This section contains general policies related to the administration of the Comprehensive Plan. These policies outline the purpose and scope of the Plan; prescribe the elements that are contained in the Plan; instruct how to maintain and amend the Plan; and provide guidance on how to use the Plan with respect to decision-making.

Legal Basis for the Comprehensive Plan

The State Code of Virginia Section 15.2-2223 mandates that every county, city and town “shall prepare and recommend a comprehensive plan for the physical development of the territory under its jurisdiction.” The plan must include transportation and future land use chapters and must address affordable housing within the Town. The plan is created with the purpose of guiding harmonious development.

INTENT AND INTERPRETATION

Intent of the Plan

The Comprehensive Plan is intended to depict a desired image of the community in the future, and to guide decision-making on matters related to physical change over time. The Plan is intended to reflect enduring community values, which form the rationale for decisions related to the physical development of the community.

Intended Audience

Public officials should consult the Plan whenever faced with decisions that could affect the physical development of the community. Residents and property and business owners should be able to rely on the Plan as a reasonable predictor of future change. Investors and developers should use the Plan to guide their investment decisions. All users of the Plan should read it carefully and in its entirety.

Interpreting the Plan

The Plan is a guide to decision-making. It is not a zoning ordinance, although it should guide the development of subsequent ordinances and regulations. The zoning ordinance and subdivision ordinance are tools to implement the policies and recommendations set forth in the Comprehensive Plan. The Town’s zoning and subdivision ordinances should be amended as needed to effectively implement the Plan. Departing from the precepts of the Plan should always be possible – although not necessarily easy. To deviate from a policy or recommendation of the Plan should require an argument as convincing as the one that created the original policy or recommendation. The Plan should be interpreted in a comprehensive manner. Decisions shall be supported by a wide range of policies and recommendations, rather than by isolated excerpts from the Plan.

Geographic Specificity

The Plan’s recommendations are geographically contextual and are not site or dimensionally specific, unless clearly stated to be site or dimensionally specific. In cases where the Plan is geographically unclear, the decision-maker should consider the immediate context of the proposal and the impact of the proposal on adjoining properties.

Scope of the Plan

The Plan applies to all areas within the political boundaries of the Town of Ashland. In addition, the Plan contemplates change in areas beyond the Town's boundaries, where such change would have a significant impact on the quality and character of Ashland. For areas outside the Town's jurisdiction, the Plan serves to advise property owners, developers, and other governmental agencies of the Town's values and desires, and forms the basis of the Town's cooperative planning relationship with Hanover County.

Definition of Planning Area

The Plan contemplates a planning area that includes the corporate limits of the Town of Ashland.

In addition to areas within the corporate limits, surrounding areas in Hanover County are suggested for study. A sphere-of-influence around the Town should be studied to suggest a desired land use pattern and transportation grid beyond the Town limits. The intention is to state the Town's expectations prior to development occurring around Ashland's perimeter. These recommendations are made in Chapter 3 Community Character and Design, Chapter 4 Land Use and Chapter 7 Transportation.

As noted on the map on the following page, there are two areas that would benefit from joint-jurisdictional planning. Area 1 is a primary area of interest, consisting of areas immediately adjacent to the Town where development would be contiguous with established or developed areas of the Town. Planning efforts in this area should focus on both transportation impact and character of development. Area 2 is a secondary area of interest, consisting of outlying areas that are adjacent to undeveloped areas of the Town, but where development would have a significant impact on Ashland. Planning efforts in this area should focus on transportation impact.

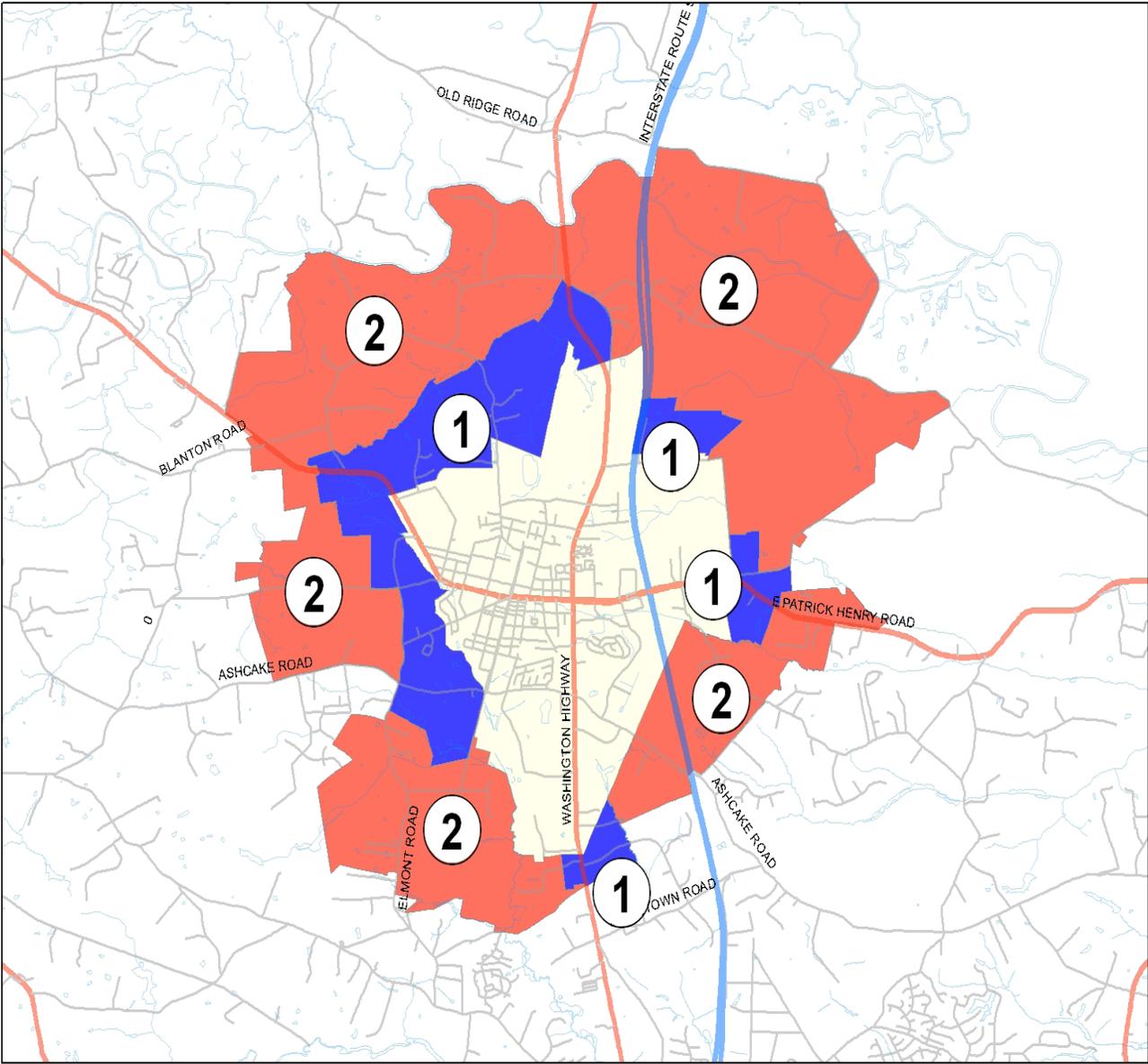
Planning Time Horizon

The Plan envisions the full build-out of the Town's existing jurisdiction for the purpose of understanding long-range needs and impacts. However, the Plan does not call for or desire full build-out within any specific time horizon. Some actions could take place immediately, such as the new Zoning Code and new Design Guidelines. Others will take longer, such as specific landscape improvements in shopping areas, or the creation of new roads and trails. Some of these could be completed in a few years; others may take twenty or more years. This Plan is therefore based on both optimism and patience about its ultimate accomplishments and successes. Additional, more specific, guidance related to the timing and sequencing of the development is found in the Land Use chapter within the Phasing of Development section of the Plan. A To-Do list is included at the end of Chapters 3 through 10 with a list of tasks to be completed.

STRUCTURE OF THE PLAN

Elements of the Plan

The Plan shall consist of three primary elements: 1) Policies; 2) Maps; and 3) Recommended Actions. Any change to the text or maps of these elements requires the approval of the Town Council. The Plan shall also contain an Appendix, which may include an index, glossary, historical information, supporting data and graphics, and procedural notes, among other items. All information contained in the Appendix, as well as any supporting graphics or illustrations found throughout the Plan, are included for explanatory purposes, and may be updated without requiring formal approval by the Town Council.



Possible Joint Jurisdictional Planning Areas

Adopted Maps

The Plan shall contain the following adopted maps:

- Future Land Use Plan Map
- Phasing of Development Map
- Transportation Plan Map
- Economic Development Zone Map
- Parks & Recreation Facilities Map
- Utilities & Infrastructure Map

- Floodplain & Natural Environment Map

If a new map is proposed for adoption, it must also be added to this master list of adopted maps.

Recommendations & Implementation

The Plan shall include recommendations for specific actions, as necessary to achieve the Plan's desired outcomes. Recommended actions may consist of text, annotations, or graphic depictions shown on any of the adopted Comprehensive Plan maps. A master list of all recommended actions shall be maintained separate from the Plan maps, and shall include priorities and assignment of responsibility for each action.

Plans Adopted by Reference

The Plan shall include a list of all other plans and studies that are adopted by reference. Any plans or studies adopted by reference shall be given the full weight and consideration accorded to the Comprehensive Plan.

CHANGES TO THE PLAN

Periodic Review & Update Required

The Plan shall be reviewed by the Planning Commission and the Town Council, at a minimum, every five (5) years, as required by the Code of Virginia. As part of the five year review, the Planning Commission and the Town Council shall determine whether any changes are necessary to any of the Policies, Maps, or Recommended Actions contained in the Plan. When possible, it is desirable to synchronize the Town's Review and Update of the Comprehensive Plan with the scheduled review and update of the Hanover County Comprehensive Plan. In an effort to remain current with the review of the Plan, the Planning Commission shall review five chapters annually.

Updates May Be Initiated on a Limited Basis

The Town Council may establish Semi-annual Update Periods for the purpose of receiving comments and suggestions for changes to the Comprehensive Plan. Suggested changes to the Plan that are received outside of the established Semi-annual Update Period may not be considered until the next Semi-annual Update Period. This provision shall not apply in scheduled Plan Review and Update years, nor shall it apply for time-sensitive matters, which would have a significant economic impact on the Town.

Amendments to the Plan

The Plan may be amended only during an established Semi-annual Update Period, with the exception of scheduled Plan Review and Update years. Amendments that may be considered during the Semi-annual Update Period include:

- Adoption of new plans or studies incorporated into the Comprehensive Plan by reference;
- Minor changes or clarifications of policy statements;
- Changes to road classifications or alignments;
- Changes to adopted maps involving less than ten (10) contiguous acres, unless recommended by a plan or study incorporated into the Comprehensive Plan by reference;
- Changes to any portion of the Plan as necessary to implement an adopted plan or study incor-

porated into the Comprehensive Plan by reference.

These provisions shall not apply to time-sensitive matters, which would have significant impact on the Town. All other changes or amendments may be considered only as part of a scheduled Plan Review and Update.

Consistency with the Plan

Development proposals that would result in a land use that is not consistent with the Future Land Use Plan Map or that would deviate from a specific recommended action contained in the Plan may not be considered without first amending the Plan. No such amendment may occur outside of an established semi-annual legislative season, with the exception of scheduled Plan Review and Update years.

Plan Adoption

Upon adoption by the Town Council, this new plan supersedes the 2002 document.