

MODIFICATIONS TO THE
LANCASTER COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
FALL 2005
PREPARED AND RECOMMENDED BY
THE FRIENDS OF LANCASTER COUNTY, LLC
Draft August 10, 2005

1) **PROCESS.** Before any modifications to the current Comprehensive Plan can be undertaken, a thorough and complete review of the many recommendations that are included in the 2000 Plan should be made. Many sections contain objectives, timeframes and other data that must be analyzed and reviewed as to the current status of each chapter's recommendations. A table should be developed enumerating each proposed action and the progress or lack of progress that currently exists. Reasons for non-action should be quantified. Many well thought out policies, goals and objectives were suggested in the current plan, and before any new additions should be considered it is reasonable to expect that explanations should be provided to the public regarding the activities involved and suggested.

2) **STATISTICAL DATA.** All statistical data listed in the current Comp. Plan must be reviewed and updated to current conditions.

3) **VISION OF THE FUTURE.** The Comprehensive Plan is intended to guide the County as it grows and develops. A preamble clearly outlining the type of development should be included in the opening pages. Generalizations that include: limitations in density, commercial development, building heights, prohibitions on strip malls, preservation of historic districts, and waterfront districts need to be fully described. The preservation of open space, the safeguarding of the County's drinking water supply, the compliance and vigorous enforcement of the Chesapeake Bay Act, the encouragement of farming and logging, the public access to navigable waters, fishing, hunting, and the preservation of seafood industries, parks and recreation areas should each be developed in a vision statement which sets the tone for the various elements of the Comprehensive Plan.

4) **PROTECTION OF THE POTABLE WATER SUPPLY.** Chapter 3, pages 3-25 to 3-30 contain valuable information and suggestions that need to be updated and expanded and implemented. A regional water system plan was proposed in 1988, and modifications to the County's Comprehensive Plan must fully explain the current status of this issue. The goals and objectives on pages

3-25, POTABLE WATER SUPPLY PLAN, items 1 through 6, and pages 3-27, SURFACE WATER, items 1 through 3, should be reviewed and acted upon. Pages 3-28 and 3-29 should also be reviewed and a table of progress presented as to what has been accomplished to date. Appendix 1, DECLINING GROUNDWATER LEVELS IN VIRGINIA'S NORTHERN NECK – A SERIOUS ISSUE, by Frank Fletcher, Hydro geologic Consultant, should be reviewed along with Appendix item 2, SUGGESTED REVISION FOR NORTHUMBERLAND COMPREHENSIVE PLAN, by SAIF Water. Appendix 3, RESERVOIR SITES, NORTHUMBERLAND AND LANCASTER COUNTIES, should also be reviewed and updated. A full status report should be made regarding the afore mentioned documents and the status of each of the recommendations listed in Chapter 3. Lancaster County should work in conjunction with Northumberland and the other Northern Neck Counties to formulate a regional water system plan as proposed on page 3-27. The Lancaster County Comprehensive plan should require a Water Advisory Council as indicated on page 327. Additionally the County should join with other Northern Neck Counties in the creation of a State Ground Water Management District as noted on page 26. LARGE GROUND WATER WITHDRAWAL data should be updated and compared to data provided in Appendix 4.

5) LAND USE AND EXISTING LANCASTER COUNTY ORDINANCES. All existing Lancaster county land use zoning ordinances should be reviewed and compared against the specific growth strategies enumerated on pages 9-10. The specific growth strategies should re-state the direction of growth. Up zoning such as attempted a few years ago should now be reconsidered as it will provide a reduction in the number of building sites that would be available for development.

6) ZONING. A separate zoning book should be developed listing each zones requirement in a columnar table. One axis of the table to contain the zone and the other axis itemizing the requirements of the zone and it's permitted uses.

7) MAPS. The current County's maps should be included in the booklet at a scale that easily identifies the individual lots. Additionally the County's computerized mapping system should allow public access at the County office building and the Lancaster Public Library. The Maps should be in such form as to allow printing by the individuals accessing the information. A further refinement of this capability would be to allow the mapping information to be accessed on the Web and tied to the County's tax map information.

8) The R-1, W-1, single family plus waterfront overlay zoning ordinance should exclude: cluster housing, PUDS, and multi-family use. The 800-foot tidal waterfront buffer / Sensitive area should NOT be encroached upon. Up zoning should be strongly considered to further protect this all-important area from over development.

9) RE-ZONING. Any request for re-zoning must be considered a major action, requiring technical justification, environmental impact statements, and rejection of all self-imposed hardships. Physical or geographical hardships such as topography which forces a projects footprint is an example of elements of a re zoning request that may warrant consideration.

10) PUDS, R-2, R-3, CLUSTER AND OTHER MULTI-FAMILY ZONES, should be clearly mapped and confined to the general area or triangle between the towns of Irvington, Whitestone and Kilmarnock. The governments of the three towns must be intimately involved in any re zoning and appropriate public hearings regarding density issues must be held.

11) DATA COLLECTION. The Comprehensive Plan should require the collection and publishing of all zoning decisions, listing the rational of each decision and enumerating by name the positions taken by each official. The data should be presented on the County's web site and be available in the County's offices. All County zoning and sub-division forms should be reviewed against today's zoning standards. No room for self-imposed hard ships should be allowed.

12) CUMMULATIVE EFFECT DATA . Lancaster County should formulate a cumulative effect data base designed to track growth and it's various impacts on the County's resources and services. This data base will provide the necessary information that is listed in number 14, Resource Analysis.

13) PROFFERS. The Comprehensive Plan should alert all developers that the County intends to use the proffering mechanisms available in an attempt to mitigate the negative effects of more intense development.

14) RESOURCE ANALYSIS. The Comprehensive Plan should require that the County's resources, which are necessary for growth, be reviewed so as to assure a thorough and technical process. The analysis of the County's services such as public safety, fire protection, public health, traffic, potable water supply and

emergency services need to be analyzed against any growth decisions.

15) FORESTRY. Some review of the current forestry practices is recommended. Consideration of a 50 to 100 foot roadside treed and vegetated buffer should be studied and a recommendation made.

16) ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENTS. The Comprehensive Plan should study and recommend a more thorough environmental impact statement for all sub-divisions, with specific requirements for certified data presentations by professional consultants.

17) A STANDING CITIZEN'S COMMITTEE as mentioned in Chapter 9, page 7, number 2 should be formed. The Friends of Lancaster County should comprise the "standing committee" as this group is ready and able to work with the county officials in assimilating citizen's reactions to zoning requests.

18) PROPERTY OWNER'S NOTIFICATION. Attached in Appendix 4 is a proposal to require various notifications from property owners and realtors to the purchasers regarding zoning and land use issues. The required notifications are developed in the Appendix 4.

19) LANCASTER COUNTY in it's revised Comprehensive Plan should be required to review annually all of the recommended elements of the revised Comprehensive Plan and produce a PROGRESS REPORT. An annual review should be made of all the Supervisors actions. The progress report should list the recommended action and the status as of the date of the report of each recommendation or required actions. Explanations for lack of progress on each element should be a requirement on the Annual Progress Report.