

Attachment 1

The Vision Statement [whose place holder is now in Chapter 8] should be at the very first of the plan, either in Chapter 1 or in a preamble. It should be the litmus test for all that follows. Unlike goals, objectives, and initiatives, action verbs should not necessarily be integral to it. Rather, it should be what the name implies, namely a collective view of how the residents feel that Lancaster County should evolve. The statement can even contain elements that are currently infeasible because of County, State, or Federal regulations, and thus highlight what needs to be brought into the political [or even judicial] process for remedy.

We spent many, many hours to discuss and debate what has been submitted as a vision statement. It embraces what we feel is not only preservative of the present unique environment but also contains ways that we see the County can be a better place for all its residents. We have intentionally avoided wording which specifically opposes “development” in the spirit of recognition that further development is both desirable and inevitable.

How can a far-reaching plan evolve without a clear vision statement? Ideally, a vision statement is the first thing that planners would draft, so that subsequent plans can flow from and be consistent with it. Certainly, it can and should be modified as the planning process matures. When the topic of a vision statement arose at a meeting of the Planning Commission, not only was the Friends’ vision statement rejected, but further it was stated that one was not needed. If such a statement is not included in the Comprehensive Plan, it can only be assumed that there is no agreement on what it should contain.

We strongly urge that the Planning Commission take seriously the essential nature of a vision statement and undertake to develop that vision now.

A Vision for Lancaster County

Lancaster County: A Snapshot

A vision for Lancaster County's future must reflect the history and heritage of its people and the bounty and beauty of its natural resources, while providing for controlled development and enhancing the quality of life of its people.

Situated at the mouth of the Rappahannock River and occupying the southeastern corner of the Northern Neck, Lancaster County comprises 133 square miles of forest and farm land and is bordered by 280 miles of shoreline on the Rappahannock River and Chesapeake Bay and their tributaries. Many families in the county boast a history dating to the seventeenth century and own land that has been in their family since that time. Lancaster County's proximity to

the water has strongly shaped its history. Before roads were easily passable, travel and trade were accomplished largely by boat. This explains, in part, why rail service was never established and why industrial development has been slow to take hold. There are no airfields or interstate bus service. The County has no U.S. numbered highways, only one major intrastate highway and only three minor arteries. There is, however, an abundance of local farm-to-market roads, an asset that contributes in large measure to our rural landscape. Watermen and fishermen have made their livings from the bounty of the waters in and surrounding Lancaster County. This continues today, although much abated because of the outside pressures of pollution and development. Farming, hunting and forestry have also played a substantial role in shaping the county. Lancaster's unique proximity to the Chesapeake Bay and neighboring rivers and its extensive water, agricultural and forestry industries have culminated in a rich cultural past and a charming rural environment. It is the sweeping farmland views, historic sites and beautiful river and bay vistas that are uniquely Lancaster County.

Demographics vary widely throughout the county ranging from families living below the poverty level to high-income families. Needs of the lower income residents include improved access to affordable housing, jobs and social services. Some families still need assistance in acquiring indoor plumbing for their homes. Retirees have been drawn to the area because of its proximity to the water and the county's unique rural quality of life. The retiree population has brought specialized skills to the area and has played an integral part in the development of the county and the services that the citizens of the county have come to rely upon. Examples are the Middle School Auditorium, Free Health Clinic and Lancaster Community library. Retirees and working people, including those in water-and agricultural-based industries provide a wide range of business and residential development opportunities. These opportunities could come at a high cost to county residents and to the environment if growth out-paces required services and infrastructure and adversely affects or detracts from the natural surroundings of the county. County officials, however, are committed to retaining the county's rural character by implementing the Lancaster County Comprehensive Plan and encouraging growth that is compatible with the needs of both the citizens and the environment.

Development

There is a tremendous amount of development taking place in Virginia and throughout the United States. As a result of developments in the marketplace, small towns are losing their individuality and family-based businesses are at risk. Until now, the four counties that make up the Northern Neck have retained their rural character, uniqueness and sense of place. Development is encouraged to be consistent with the rural character and history of the county. To accomplish this, county citizens and officials will oversee and guide growth so that it

enhances the quality of life for those already residing here, and does not overtax existing services or result in unplanned sprawl that creeps across the county landscape. To fairly and comprehensively oversee future development, the following vision and goals have been developed by Lancaster County citizens and officials.

The Vision

Lancaster County will remain a rural county with its farmland, forests, woodland and river vistas as its signature features. To protect its rural character, county officials will encourage small businesses and services to locate in the existing towns of Kilmarnock, White Stone and Irvington as well as the unincorporated villages. This will preserve the county's overall rural character and allow the towns to grow, while still retaining their individual identities. County officials will encourage the creation of locally owned, human-scaled businesses and services to achieve compatibility with the needs of county residents and existing businesses. In dealing with land use issues, officials will respect the history, culture and aesthetics of the county, and will strive to protect and enhance its unique character. County officials will confer and cooperate with the officials of the towns and villages within the county to achieve these goals.

Development for the county will be sustainable based upon current water supply and challenges presented by the areas soils that have shrink-swell characteristics and low percolation rates. These factors will be the basis in calculating the "build out" capacity of the County, thereby reducing the risk of over-development of the area and overuse of its resources. While construction of reservoirs may be explored, development of the county will not be based upon reservoir capacity until such time as a reservoir is built and available for use by county residents.

Part-time residents and tourists will continue to be an economic factor, so development of public water access and recreational facilities for residents and tourists will be a priority.

Lancaster County will continue to be a diverse population with a mixture of high, middle and low-income residents.

Planning Principles and Guidelines

To achieve this vision, the following planning principles and guidelines will be utilized as decisions are made regarding future growth, development and redevelopment in Lancaster County:

- 1) To maintain the rural character of the county, all development proposals will be required to include an open space component. Other alternatives to preserve open space could include government acquisition or private preservation trusts.

The county will explore alternatives that will provide incentives to landowners to preserve their land as open-space.

2) All planning for future development must be limited by current water supplies (shallow and deep wells), not the expectation that a future reservoir will provide water.

3) Development will be accomplished in an environmentally-sensitive manner in accordance with the spirit and the letter of all County, State and Federal laws and requirements.

4) Environmental regulations will be strictly enforced and willful violations vigorously prosecuted.

5) The county will seek to attract socially responsible and compatible businesses that will provide meaningful employment opportunities and meet the retail and service needs of its residents.

6) The county will encourage preservation of its traditional farming, hunting, forestry, and seafood industries while paying particular attention to the impact such industries have on the environment.

7) The county will actively seek out and procure public access to waterways and recreational areas for residents and tourists.

8) The county will identify and preserve historic sites and encourage the redevelopment, restoration or reuse of existing homes and buildings in an effort to preserve the county's history and architecture.

9) The county will ensure that a balance is maintained between growth and the services needed to maintain that growth (e.g., schools, medical facilities, emergency services, roadways).

10) The county will encourage businesses to use architectural, low impact and consistent details reflective of the area's culture and history.

11) The county will encourage use of Rappahanock Community College and private training programs to generate a skilled indigenous work force.

12) The county will maintain the rural character of secondary roads. Through routes will not conflict with local traffic. Pedestrians will be given priority in village and town centers through planning and design of appropriate facilities. Public transportation will be encouraged and supported.

Conclusion

This Vision Statement is meant as overall guidance for the future development of the county to be used in conjunction with the county's Comprehensive Plan and its ordinances. Many of the principles outlined in this document may require financial incentives or proffers by developers or expenditures by the county. Other items will require a change or update to the ordinances. Lancaster County in the future can be all of these things: beautiful, rural, prosperous and well-planned. It will take governmental leadership, community involvement and vision to accomplish that goal.

4th draft 1/18/06

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ATTACHMENT II

Chapter 8 – Land Use

In the Fall of 2005, Lancaster County initiated the update of the 2000 Comprehensive Plan. The purpose of the Update is two-fold. The first is to meet the statutory requirement (Title 15.2-2223 of the State Code) that localities review their Comprehensive Plan at least every five years. Secondly, the County determined that the 2000 Plan and land use codes did not provide effective tools to manage land use and to preserve the County's natural beauty and rural character. Recently cited as "One of the Best Places to Live" in *Progressive Farmer* magazine, the County can expect to receive increasing interest from retiring baby boomers and others attracted to its unique scenic resources, extensive waterfront and high quality of life. Many would agree with Captain John Smith's assessment, made almost four hundred years ago in 1608, that the County is "a place where heaven and earth never agreed better to frame man's habitation." County officials often found themselves attempting to make incremental decisions on land use without clearly articulated guiding principles or maps in the Plan. Recognizing that improved policies and regulations were badly needed to help guide future land use, the County determined that the main focus of the update would be to revise the Plan's land use elements and related provisions in the Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances.

The Plan update began with a series of five public input meetings held in locations throughout the County. The following primary issues emerged through the course of the five meetings and other public input provided to the Consultant team.

- Preserve the County's rural character
- Preserve the quality of the County's waterfront
- Manage the quality and character of future development
- Preserve and increase public access to the county's waterfront
- Preserve historic character, buildings and sites
- Increase the supply of affordable housing
- Pursue economic development and increase jobs, particularly for young people and working-age adults
- Protect the watershed, groundwater, aquifers, drinking water, and waterways and ensure the adequate supply of potable water
- Prevent sprawl and 'checker-board' development
- Concentrate higher-density commercial and residential development in appropriate areas, particularly around existing towns.
- Increase recreational opportunities including parks, biking and trails, and public access to the water

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Following the public input meetings, the 2000 Comprehensive Plan was reviewed to determine the changes needed in the Plan document and the Zoning Ordinance to address these land use issues and goals. The issue of economic development is addressed in Chapter 7, while protection of water resources is primarily addressed in Chapter 3.

VISION STATEMENT

Lancaster County

Recommend move to Chapter 1 or Preamble.

The remaining land use issues have been organized into five major themes or elements:

1. Rural Character and Heritage
2. **Waterfront/Shoreline Quality**
3. Quality Growth
4. Recreational Opportunities
5. Diverse Communities

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1. RURAL CHARACTER AND HERITAGE

Lancaster County citizens strongly desire to preserve the County's rural, peaceful and quiet character and heritage.

Goal: Preserve Lancaster County's Rural Character and Heritage

Retaining the County's rural character involves four elements:

1. Protecting farmland and agricultural resources
2. **Preserving waterfront/shorelines and water dependant resources**
3. Preserving the County's historic resources
4. Preserving undeveloped open space and views along public roads and waterways.

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The following section identifies objectives and polices for each of the four elements and recommendations for Plan amendments.

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1. Protecting farmland and agricultural resources

[Note to editor – statistics below need to be updated.]

Of the 42,930 acres of land in Lancaster County considered to be prime for agricultural activity, 17,014 acres were still in use in 1990 for farming purposes. Farming is an important component of the County's economic history and farmlands provide the "aesthetically pleasing landscape" referred to by many citizens, contribute to the local

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economy and also assist with recharging groundwater aquifers. According to the 2000 Census, employment related to farming, fishing and forestry declined over 65% between 1990 and 2000 (253 jobs to 85 jobs). The change in employment does not necessarily imply a direct correlation in the reduction of land in agricultural use, but does indicate trends in agriculture-related activity. The County recognizes that different key policy approaches are required for farmland preservation versus open space preservation; and that effective farmland preservation and management efforts require a multi-faceted approach with many elements beyond land use policies and regulations.

Objective 1-A: Preserve, protect and promote the County’s agricultural lands and activities.

Strategies:

- **Initiate agricultural/forest district formation,**
- **Impliment land use taxation,**
- **Support the family farm,**
- **Encourage sustainable agricultural and forestry practices;**
- **Investigate the economic feasibility of implementing a purchase of development rights program as is being done in the City of Virginia Beach and Albemarle County,**
- **Amend the Lancaster County zoning ordinance to insure that development of non-agricultural land use does not compromise agricultural and silvacultural uses.**
- **Protect the rural character of the county by strongly encouraging the use of natural vegetation as a screening or barrier between agricultural/silvacultural uses and residential development and agricultural/silvacultural uses and commercial development;**
 - Develop a comprehensive farmland protection program with the necessary blend of land use and economic policies and actions.
 - Update the inventory of land still in agricultural use as a first step to allow for improved farmland management and development of a comprehensive farmland protection program.
 - Direct new residential and commercial development to designated growth areas (see Objective 2A).
 - Refine the list of permitted uses within the agricultural areas to limit those uses related to agricultural community activities.
 - Adopt a right-to-farm policy statement to allow activities related to farming operations to continue. Provide information about farming practice and its cultural **and economic** importance in Lancaster County to prospective homebuyers.

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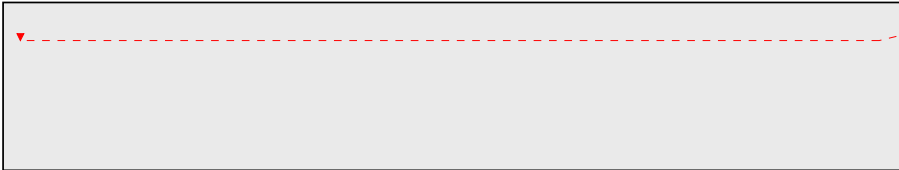
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Revise the Zoning Ordinance to require **conditional** Residential Zoning for all residential subdivision activities **in agricultural and forested lands. There should be a requirement that the property owner place a significant portion of the original parcel in open space. The location of the parcel(s) identified as the protected space should preserve core operating farms when feasible. A preferred minimum residential lot size should be established (Three acres is recommended) that will preserve open space in an agricultural and forested environment and it is recommended that Open Space Site Design principles be followed.**

Objective 1-B: Preserve, protect and promote the County’s waterfront/shoreline areas, water vistas, and water-dependant commercial and recreational activities.

Strategies:

- **Preserve the Waterfront Overlay**
- **Develop measures to preserve and promote water-dependant fishing activities.**
- **Promote increased water-dependant recreational activities by enhancing public access to water and by improving and publicizing existing water access facilities.**
- **Apply for funds from the Saltwater License Fund at the Virginia Marine Resources Commission to be used for the purchase of land and construction of public boat ramps.**

Objective 1-C: Preserve the historic resources and archaeological sites that reflect the heritage and historical significance of Lancaster County.

The County’s historic buildings and other resources are an important part of the County’s identity and character and should be protected. Chapter 6 of the Plan notes the importance and benefits of historic preservation, and includes a partial listing of the County’s historic resources and a policy goal with four objectives for historic preservation. Additional strategies include the following:

Strategies:

- Provide property owners with information on how to have their properties included in the Virginia Landmarks Register or the National Register and how

Deleted: (The County’s current ‘agricultural’ zoning districts include A-1 which allows for by-right development of one dwelling unit per two acres and A-2 which allows for almost two dwelling units per acre. This style of conventional large-lot subdivision development, along with the lack of any farmland preservation policies, creates a high potential for the loss of prime agricultural land and inefficient development patterns that counteract the overall objective).

Deleted: <#>Allow residential conservation subdivision by-right (not to exceed the maximum density allowed) in the A-1 and A-2 zoning districts. Develop conservation subdivision design standards to encourage efficient land use and preservation of land area adequate to function as farmland. Residential design standards should also provide for appropriate transitions and buffering between the residential component and open space areas and nearby properties or roadways.¶

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to seek available Federal rehabilitation tax credits

- Create and maintain a computerized inventory, listing and map of all significant historic, cultural, architectural and archeological sites. The Virginia Department of Resources provides a resource for technical and financial assistance to local jurisdictions. Include all identified historic, cultural, archeological and architecturally significant sites on a map in the amended Comprehensive Plan.
- Require surveying, identifying and mitigating adverse impacts on proven historic resources as a condition for rezoning and special use permits.
- Encourage voluntary efforts for historic preservation, including donation of preservation easements by property owners.
- Utilize strategies such as brochures with local landmarks, local landmark signs, and driving tours.

Objective 1-D: Preserve open space and views along public roads and waterways.

County residents desire to retain the views along the County's roadways and are concerned over the potential impact of any type of development on these views.

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Strategies:

- Promote land use practices to preserve the rural character and qualities of the County.
- Allow low intensity field crop farming as a by-right use in reserved open space areas.
- Allow efficient development patterns that prioritize preservation of open space, wooded areas, and other features
- Conditionally allow residential subdivisions to protect agricultural land and open space.
- Discourage commercial and residential sprawl along road corridors through inappropriate rezonings.
- The County has adopted a Highway Corridor Overlay District in its Zoning Ordinance which applies to Routes 3, 354, and 200 **and the James B. Jones Memorial Highway** (except within the town limits of Kilmarnock, White Stone, and Irvington.) Revise the Historic Corridor Overlay District to better protect the rural character and to encourage appropriate development. In order to preserve the County's rural character and minimize the impact of nonresidential and multifamily development on the rural aesthetic, the HCOD standards should be enhanced to promote a development pattern that acknowledges and supports this policy goal.
- Provide incentives to retain stands of trees, open spaces, and other buffer areas. Incentives may include lot size flexibility or site layout flexibility in exchange for increased buffering from the roadway.
- **Develop a buffer ordinance that applies only to residentially zoned parcels and which protects open space views.**
- **Develop an ordinance which protects and preserves the 1000**

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Deleted: Therefore, setbacks should be established from the edge of the roadway, instead of from the centerline of the road. This will ensure a more consistent 'look and feel' along the various roadways. Additionally, the County should consider revising the land development regulations to limit the amount of parking allowed between the primary structure and the roadway. Rather than allowing an unlimited amount of parking in this important visual area, the ordinance could be revised to limit parking to one or two bays, with the balance of parking located to the side or rear of the primary structure(s). Alternatively, the standards could be revised to allow more site design and layout flexibility (reduced setbacks, increased building height, less restrictions on parking location, etc.) if the development is completely screened from the roadway by a site plan that is designed and developed to retain significant stands of trees along the road frontage and/or provide buffering through landscaped, vegetated berms.

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foot vistas along public roadways.

- Encourage the use of conservation easements and land trusts to help preserve open space, farmland, and undeveloped natural areas along the County’s roadways and waterways.
- **Establish a County administered land trust to hold conservation easements and land trusts for smaller parcels.**

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2. QUALITY GROWTH

The County desires to **encourage well-managed growth as its rural nature and pristine waterfront areas continue to become more attractive to a larger numbers of retirees, to discourage sprawl-like development occurring in the County, and to steer future development to the most appropriate locations within the County. The County also wishes to encourage development that is consistent with the rural nature of the County, preserves the natural beauty of the County’s land areas and shoreline, and which ensures careful development of waterfront areas in a manner that will reduce the risk of water quality degradation in the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries.** The County’s Future Land Use Map shows the desired location and pattern of future land use, including the type and intensity of new residential, commercial or industrial development. Character areas **have been identified to describe desired land use patterns and characteristics and to serve as a guide for future land use decisions.**

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Ensure orderly and well-managed land use that protects the County’s natural beauty, quality of life and its communities.

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Character Areas

A Primary Growth Area (PGA) includes existing locations of the highest level of residential, commercial, and employment activity with the highest level of existing public infrastructure, including public water and sewer. Most community services, such as hospitals and places of higher education, are located in the PGA. The primary centers of commercial and development activity in the County are the three towns of Kilmarnock, White Stone and Irvington. The unincorporated area located between the towns, in a roughly triangular shape, **as delineated in the accompanying land use map,** is designated as the Primary Growth Area (PGA) for the County. The vast majority of all new higher density residential and intensive commercial activity will be directed to the Primary Growth Area. **However, to protect the water quality of the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries and to ensure that controlled low**

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density development is permitted along County waterways, high density development will not be permitted within areas now designated as part of the Waterfront Overlay District, although those areas may be physically located within the PGA. Generally, appropriate development in the PGA includes **medium**-density single-family housing (2-4 units per acre), multi-family housing (4-6 units per acre), small to large commercial and retail activity, offices, industrial parks, and warehousing and distribution facilities.

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Secondary Growth Areas are appropriate for concentrating **low density residential** and commercial development. **These are designated on the accompanying land use map.** Generally, appropriate development in the SGAs includes **low density single family housing** (1-2 dwelling units per acre), small to medium-scale retail activity, offices, and light manufacturing. **However, to protect the water quality of the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries and to ensure that controlled very low density development is permitted along County waterways, such development as defined above will not be permitted within areas now designated as part of the Waterfront Overlay District, although those areas may be physically located within the SGA.**

Deleted: There are several traditional village centers located at key crossroads throughout the County that were once centers of residential development and commercial activity. A list of these would include Alfonso, Bertrand, Foxwells, Lively, Litwalton, McNeals Corner, Millenbeck, Mollusk, Morratico, Nuttsville, Ottoman, Palmer, Regina, Weems, and Westland. ¶

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Deleted: <sp>Due to their moderate level of existing development and activity, four of these villages -- Lancaster, Lively, Morratico and Weems are the most suitable locations for Secondary Growth Areas.

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Designated Rural Areas include those areas that the County wants to retain as farmland and open space. These areas are also suitable for forests and forestry, parks and recreational space.

The primary policy for areas of the County that are designated as "Rural Areas" is to preserve and maintain agricultural and forestal activities, to protect ground and surface water supplies and to conserve natural historic and scenic resources. Land uses that conflict with this policy objective should be discouraged. When nonagricultural uses extend into agricultural areas, conflicts increase. Farm and forest landowners many times become the victims of nuisance complaints or lawsuits, which have the effect of decreasing the viability of agricultural and forestal activities. Residential land use at a density that is detrimental to agricultural and forestal activity should be discouraged.in recognition of the agricultural landowners' right to farm and engage in silvicultural practices without being restricted by neighboring residential uses.

Deleted: or that are primarily appropriate for compact residential development occurring in conservation subdivisions. Conservation Design for Subdivisions by Randal G. Arendt identifies conservation subdivisions as residential developments that maximize open space open space conservation without reducing overall building density and where half or more of the buildable land area is designated as undivided, permanent open space." Well-designed conservation subdivisions offer far greater opportunity for significant open space than do conventional subdivisions. They also can help to mitigate or avoid the 'checkerboard' development or sprawl by allowing for efficient and creative residential development. They typically allow access to and enjoyment of open space over large-lot subdivisions where the benefit of the undeveloped area or 'open space' is primarily retained (... [1])

A preferred minimum residential lot size should be established (Three acres is recommended) that is consistent with preserving open space in an agricultural and forested environment, and it is recommended that Open Space Site Design principles be followed for the residential parcels.

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Residential areas include primarily those areas in the County that have already been approved for residential development or have been developed for residential use. Recognizing that many of these areas have already been developed, new development in

the vicinity should recognize existing defined development patterns and be sensitive to established context. Residential areas are located in proximity to the larger towns and concentrations of development. **A preferred minimum residential lot size should be established (Three acres is recommended) that is consistent with preserving open space in a rural environment.**

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Reservoir overlay districts include eight potential impoundment or reservoir sites identified in a 1973 study. These sites will be carefully managed, and decisions will be reached on which of these sites and their adjoining watersheds should be protected from intensive development. Ensuring an adequate supply of drinking water is important, as the County is entirely dependent on groundwater for its drinking supply and there are well founded concerns that groundwater alone is insufficient to accommodate the County's needs. Appropriate activities in these areas are those with a relatively small "footprint" such as low-intensity agricultural and timbering uses, open air and low-polluting commercial and industrial uses such as timber storage, and very low density residential development. Uses with high infrastructure and capital investment costs are discouraged from locating within areas identified as potential reservoir sites.

Historic Districts and Places include sites and buildings that are listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the Virginia Landmarks Register and other identified areas of historic or archeological significance.

Industrial/Employment includes locations most suitable for warehousing and storage facilities, light manufacturing plants and some public facilities. Heavy industrial and manufacturing activities with a significant noise, air quality, water quality, and visual impact, as well significant impact on county roads, are not considered appropriate for Lancaster County.

Public Parks and Recreation includes publicly owned or controlled parkland and recreational sites.

Public Lands and Facilities

This category includes all publicly owned lands such as County or State offices, schools, libraries and fire stations and any publicly-owned or controlled water access points.

Towns/Incorporated Areas

This category includes the three towns of Kilmarnock, White Stone and Irvington.

Objective 2-A: Concentrate new and orderly development in areas of the County most suitable for new growth

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- The Future Land Use Map shows the desired future land use patterns in the County. Future development and land use decisions should be consistent with the Future Land Use Map and character areas.
- Concentrate higher-density commercial and residential development in appropriate areas, particularly around existing towns.

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- Discourage development of areas with poor soils, high water tables, steep slopes or areas with other environmental constraints.
- Promote and participate in the development of a Regional Land Use Plan for compatible land use at the borders of jurisdictions.

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Objective 2-B: New development should complement and enhance the existing quality and character of existing neighborhoods and communities.

- Evaluate rezonings and conditional use permit applications to ensure consistency with the Comprehensive Plan and compatibility with the character of the surrounding area.
- Ensure that the scale, character and density of new development is compatible with adjacent land uses.
- Encourage development with design features such as varied building orientation and setback, lot size, façade treatment, open space and landscaping to help avoid the visual repetition of suburban sprawl.
- Reduce the number of permitted uses in existing zoning districts to avoid mixed, incompatible uses within a zoning district.

Objective 2-C: The County should ensure the provision of adequate water supply by protecting potential future reservoir sites.

- Eight potential impoundment or reservoir sites were identified in a 1973 study. Preserving these sites to meet future demand is very important for a County that is entirely dependent on groundwater for its drinking supply. The County should create a special reservoir overlay zone to protect the impoundment areas from encroaching development.
- **Create a new or join an existing State Water Management area.**

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3. RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Lancaster County needs additional recreational facilities and opportunities, including bicycle and pedestrian paths and trails.

Goal: Provide a range of recreational facilities and activities to accommodate the needs of all County residents

Objective 3-A: Develop a comprehensive system of pathways and trails suitable for use by bicyclists, pedestrians, and horse riders

Chapter 6 states the County has adopted a series of Class III (shared with the existing roadway) bikeways which extend throughout the County and includes a related map, *Bicycle Trails of Lancaster County*, with a plan for bikeway improvements. Lancaster County should use this existing Bicycle Trails Plan as the basis for developing a more comprehensive county-wide multi-use trail, bicycle and pedestrian system. The system

would serve both short-distance trips between neighborhoods and nearby services, and also longer-distance transportation and recreational users.

Strategies:

- Expand upon the Bicycle Trails Plan to develop a comprehensive County-wide Bicycle and Pedestrian Trails Program with a prioritized list of improvements for implementation.
- Inventory and map existing bikeways, sidewalks and trails to determine location and condition as the starting point for the County-wide Bicycle and Pedestrian Trails Program.
- Include the action steps in Chapter 6 (Section B. Highways, 3. Planned Highway Improvements by VDOT, C. Bicycle Trail) in the Bicycle and Pedestrian Trails Program. Bike paths and sidewalks will be considered in the design of improved and new road projects. Small projects such as painting bike lane stripes on existing roadways with sufficient pavement width, minor grading, gravel compaction, and vegetation trimming will be undertaken as a means of improving safety and utility. Consistent with the plan, additional grant funding will be sought to carry out such larger projects as bridge widening, separate path construction, and shoulder paving.
- Encourage developers to construct bikeways and sidewalks for transportation and recreation purposes.
- **Seek the use of Utility rights-of-way for bicycle and walking trails.**

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Objective 3-B: Develop a Parks and Recreation Program

Chapter 6 identifies existing publicly and privately-owned recreational sites and facilities. It also includes a list of standards for a range of recreational facilities including baseball and softball fields, basketball, tennis and swimming pools and notes that these standards “may be adjusted as appropriate for Lancaster County.” One way in which the County’s population is distinctly different from the rest of the state is its relatively high percentage of residents over the age of 65, estimated to be almost 30% in the 2000 US Census versus 11% statewide. Demographic trends such as these suggest that the County needs to take additional steps to better identify the recreational opportunities that are most appropriate and desired by residents.

Strategies

- Establish a citizen’s committee charged with making recommendations for projects and improvements to be included in the Parks and Recreation Master Program with a prioritized list of desired improvements and facilities.
- Conduct an inventory of the current publicly-owned and privately-owned recreational facilities that are accessible to the public.
- Survey County residents to determine recreation needs and priorities
- Use the Program as a basis for identifying proffers for development or redevelopment
- Many citizens identified improved public access to the water as a desired element of recreational opportunities in the County. The ‘Public and Private

Access to Waterfront Areas Plan' in Chapter 5 includes several goals and objectives to improve public access to water, and should serve as the basis for this element of the County's Parks and Recreation Program.

- Apply for funds from the Saltwater License Fund at the Virginia Marine Resources Commission to be used for the purchase of land and construction of public boat ramps.

Objective 3-C: New waterfront development or redevelopment should preserve the natural beauty of shoreline areas and minimize the risk of degradation to the water quality of the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries.

Strategies:

- Continue careful management of all waterfront development, including adherence to requirements of both the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act and the County's Waterfront Overlay District.
- Develop additional protective land use policies and zoning regulations that will encourage the use of Low Impact Design (LID) and Best Management Practices (BMP's) on the waterfront.
- Limit high-density waterfront development to areas that are outside the County's Waterfront Overlay District and located in very close proximity to existing population centers with requisite supporting infrastructures, and where development can be accomplished with minimal adverse environmental impact.

4. DIVERSE COMMUNITIES

Lancaster County needs more 'affordable' or 'workforce' housing in the County along with the need for a diverse housing stock. About 84% of the approximately 614 residential building permits issued in the County between 2000 and 2005 were for single-family residential units. Additionally, much of the new development was and continues to be located on very expensive waterfront areas. According to the 2000 Census, about 3.2% of existing homes in the County were in multi-unit structures, as compared to over 21% statewide. The great majority of land in the County is zoned for large-lot development (one dwelling unit per one or per two acres).

Lancaster County desires to retain its traditional diverse and eclectic housing stock and communities, with a range of housing types and income levels located in close proximity, as an important component of community character.

Goal: Provide a range of housing options and types to preserve the diversity of the County's communities and to meet the housing needs of County residents

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Objectives 4-A: To Insure provision of Safe, Affordable Housing in Lancaster County

Strategies:

- 1. Conduct a regional housing needs inventory;**
- 2. Survey and publicize the needs identified in the needs inventory.**
- 3. Work with lending institutions, state and federal agencies, and private parties to increase affordable home ownership opportunities and publicize them widely.**

OBJECTIVE 4-B: REHABILITATE THE COUNTY'S SUBSTANDARD HOUSING STOCK

Strategy:

- 1. Support efforts to provide safe, sanitary and decent housing for the residents of Lancaster County.**

OBJECTIVE 4-C: PROMOTE AFFORDABLE RENTAL UNITS AT A SCALE AND IN LOCATIONS CONSISTENT WITH THE COUNTY'S GROWTH MANAGEMENT POLICY

Strategy:

- 1. Encourage the availability of rental units accepting Section 8 certificates and vouchers.**

Planning Process

In addition to land use issues, the County will improve the planning process itself, increasing opportunities for public participation in land use decision making, and improving the link between the Comprehensive Plan and the Zoning Ordinance. The County will also seek better coordination on land use planning between the County and the three towns.

Plan Implementation

Lancaster County has limited planning resources and staff, and like all other jurisdictions, many demands for public funds. Nevertheless, with public input, the County will develop an implementation program for the Plan, with short-term, mid-term and long-term priorities. A Plan Advisory Committee should be created and charged with annual progress review and reports on the implementation program.

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<#>Revise the County's Zoning Ordinance to allow for residential neighborhoods which offer a variety of housing types with appropriate development standards to ensure compatibility with surrounding development. ¶

<#>Ensure an adequate supply of land in appropriate locations is provided for medium density residential development.¶

<#>Encourage infill development in residential areas to minimize development costs and maximize the development potential of land convenient to public facilities and services.¶

<#>Revise the Zoning Ordinance as necessary to allow for increased housing flexibility in residential districts. These revisions should allow conservation subdivision, zero-lot line development, accessory apartment, mixed housing types and other innovative design options with appropriate development standards.¶

<#>Provide bonuses or incentives to development proposals that address the need for affordable housing.¶

<#>Review family member transfer standards to ensure regulations are not creating an undue burden on families.¶

<#>Revise and adopt the improved R-2 district to allow for additional multi-family housing development with appropriate development standards to prevent unwanted development patterns and provide transitions between dif...

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Lancaster County is fortunate to have a large number of citizens who are committed ensuring the overall quality of life in the County over the future. The County will utilize this resource by creating various citizen task forces charged with assisting to implement various elements of the Plan. These task forces will include representation from all perspectives of the County.

Definitions:

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Agricultural generally refers to land that is, or has been, used for agricultural activity and has not been developed for higher intensity uses.

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Very Low Density Residential generally refers to single-family detached houses at a density of less than one dwelling unit per acre.

Low Density Residential generally refers to single-family detached houses at a density of one or two dwelling units per acre.

Medium Density Residential generally refers to a variety of housing types (i.e. single-family or two-family, townhouses, multi-family, manufactured) at a density of three to six dwelling units per acre.

High Density Residential generally refers to any housing type at a density of more than six dwelling units per acre.

Affordable Housing Housing that takes no more than 30% of a household's monthly income for a household earning up to 80% of the County's median income as determined annually from the preceding tax year.

or that are primarily appropriate for compact residential development occurring in conservation subdivisions. Conservation Design for Subdivisions by Randal G. Arendt identifies conservation subdivisions as residential developments that maximize open space open space conservation without reducing overall building density and where half or more of the buildable land area is designated as undivided, permanent open space.” Well-designed conservation subdivisions offer far greater opportunity for significant open space than do conventional subdivisions. They also can help to mitigate or avoid the ‘checkerboard’ development or sprawl by allowing for efficient and creative residential development. They typically allow access to and enjoyment of open space over large-lot subdivisions where the benefit of the undeveloped area or ‘open space’ is primarily retained for homeowner only. The retained open space can serve as active and/or passive recreation space for residents and the wider community. The increased design flexibility allows for septic systems to be placed on the best-suited soils on the individual parcels or to be located ‘off-site’ including in the open space area. Development intensity (density) in conservation subdivisions should not exceed allowed densities for the district, except through a design review process that allows community involvement.

- Encourage diverse and innovative housing and subdivision design.
- Revise the County’s Zoning Ordinance to allow for residential neighborhoods which offer a variety of housing types with appropriate development standards to ensure compatibility with surrounding development.
- Ensure an adequate supply of land in appropriate locations is provided for medium density residential development.
- Encourage infill development in residential areas to minimize development costs and maximize the development potential of land convenient to public facilities and services.
- Revise the Zoning Ordinance as necessary to allow for increased housing flexibility in residential districts. These revisions should allow conservation subdivision, zero-lot line development, accessory apartment, mixed housing types and other innovative design options with appropriate development standards.
- Provide bonuses or incentives to development proposals that address the need for affordable housing.
- Review family member transfer standards to ensure regulations are not creating an undue burden on families.
- Revise and adopt the improved R-2 district to allow for additional multi-family housing development with appropriate development standards to prevent unwanted development patterns and provide transitions between different development styles.
- Coordinate with neighboring jurisdictions to develop a regional approach to housing needs.

ATTACHMENT III

Chapter 8 – Land Use

In the Fall of 2005, Lancaster County initiated the update of the 2000 Comprehensive Plan. The purpose of the Update is two-fold. The first is to meet the statutory requirement (Title 15.2-2223 of the State Code) that localities review their Comprehensive Plan at least every five years. Secondly, the County determined that the 2000 Plan and land use codes did not provide effective tools to manage land use and to preserve the County's natural beauty and rural character. Recently cited as "One of the Best Places to Live" in *Progressive Farmer* magazine, the County can expect to receive increasing interest from retiring baby boomers and others attracted to its unique scenic resources, extensive waterfront and high quality of life. Many would agree with Captain John Smith's assessment, made almost four hundred years ago in 1608, that the County is "a place where heaven and earth never agreed better to frame man's habitation." County officials often found themselves attempting to make incremental decisions on land use without clearly articulated guiding principles or maps in the Plan. Recognizing that improved policies and regulations were badly needed to help guide future land use, the County determined that the main focus of the update would be to revise the Plan's land use elements and related provisions in the Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances.

The Plan update began with a series of five public input meetings held in locations throughout the County. The following primary issues emerged through the course of the five meetings and other public input provided to the Consultant team.

- Preserve the County's rural character
- Preserve the quality of the County's waterfront
- Manage the quality and character of future development
- Preserve and increase public access to the county's waterfront
- Preserve historic character, buildings and sites
- Increase the supply of affordable housing
- Pursue economic development and increase jobs, particularly for young people and working-age adults
- Protect the watershed, groundwater, aquifers, drinking water, and waterways and ensure the adequate supply of potable water
- Prevent sprawl and 'checker-board' development
- Concentrate higher-density commercial and residential development in appropriate areas, particularly around existing towns.
- Increase recreational opportunities including parks, biking and trails, and public access to the water

Following the public input meetings, the 2000 Comprehensive Plan was reviewed to determine the changes needed in the Plan document and the Zoning Ordinance to address these land use issues and goals. The issue of economic development is addressed in Chapter 7, while protection of water resources is primarily addressed in Chapter 3.

VISION STATEMENT

Lancaster County

Recommend move to Chapter 1 or Preamble.

The remaining land use issues have been organized into five major themes or elements:

1. Rural Character and Heritage
2. **Waterfront/Shoreline Quality**
3. Quality Growth
4. Recreational Opportunities
5. Diverse Communities

1. RURAL CHARACTER AND HERITAGE

Lancaster County citizens strongly desire to preserve the County's rural, peaceful and quiet character and heritage.

Goal: Preserve Lancaster County's Rural Character and Heritage

Retaining the County's rural character involves four elements:

1. Protecting farmland and agricultural resources
2. **Preserving waterfront/shorelines and water dependant resources**
3. Preserving the County's historic resources
4. Preserving undeveloped open space and views along **public roads and waterways.**

The following section identifies objectives and polices for each of the four elements and recommendations for Plan amendments.

1. Protecting farmland and agricultural resources

[Note to editor – statistics below need to be updated.]

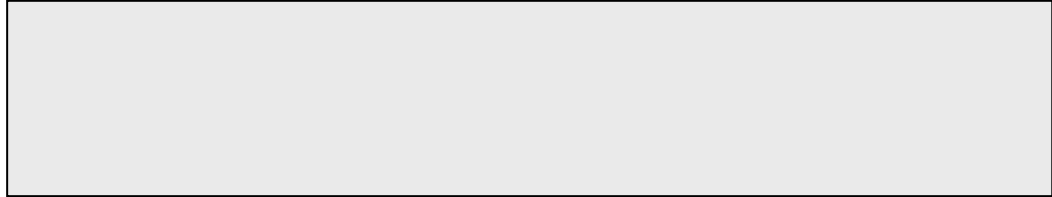
Of the 42,930 acres of land in Lancaster County considered to be prime for agricultural activity, 17,014 acres were still in use in 1990 for farming purposes. Farming is an important component of the County's economic history and farmlands provide the "aesthetically pleasing landscape" referred to by many citizens, contribute to the local

economy and also assist with recharging groundwater aquifers. According to the 2000 Census, employment related to farming, fishing and forestry declined over 65% between 1990 and 2000 (253 jobs to 85 jobs). The change in employment does not necessarily imply a direct correlation in the reduction of land in agricultural use, but does indicate trends in agriculture-related activity. The County recognizes that different key policy approaches are required for farmland preservation versus open space preservation; and that effective farmland preservation and management efforts require a multi-faceted approach with many elements beyond land use policies and regulations.

Objective 1-A: Preserve, protect and promote the County's agricultural lands and activities.

Strategies:

- **Initiate agricultural/forest district formation.**
- **Impliment land use taxation.**
- **Support the family farm.**
- **Encourage sustainable agricultural and forestry practices;**
- **Investigate the economic feasibility of implementing a purchase of development rights program as is being done in the City of Virginia Beach and Albemarle County.**
- **Amend the Lancaster County zoning ordinance to insure that development of non-agricultural land use does not compromise agricultural and silvacultural uses.**
- **Protect the rural character of the county by strongly encouraging the use of natural vegetation as a screening or barrier between agricultural/silvacultural uses and residential development and agricultural/silvacultural uses and commercial development;**
- Develop a comprehensive farmland protection program with the necessary blend of land use and economic policies and actions.
- Update the inventory of land still in agricultural use as a first step to allow for improved farmland management and development of a comprehensive farmland protection program.
- Direct new residential and commercial development to designated growth areas (see Objective 2A).
- Refine the list of permitted uses within the agricultural areas to limit those uses related to agricultural community activities.
- Adopt a right-to-farm policy statement to allow activities related to farming operations to continue. Provide information about farming practice and its cultural **and economic** importance in Lancaster County to prospective homebuyers.



Revise the Zoning Ordinance to require **conditional** Residential Zoning for all residential subdivision activities **in agricultural and forested lands**. **There should be a requirement that the property owner place a significant portion of the original parcel in open space. The location of the parcel(s) identified as the protected space should preserve core operating farms when feasible. A preferred minimum residential lot size should be established (Three acres is recommended) that will preserve open space in an agricultural and forested environment and it is recommended that Open Space Site Design principles be followed.**

Objective 1-B: Preserve, protect and promote the County’s waterfront/shoreline areas, water vistas, and water-dependant commercial and recreational activities.

Strategies:

- **Preserve the Waterfront Overlay**
- **Develop measures to preserve and promote water-dependant fishing activities.**
- **Promote increased water-dependant recreational activities by enhancing public access to water and by improving and publicizing existing water access facilities.**
- **Apply for funds from the Saltwater License Fund at the Virginia Marine Resources Commission to be used for the purchase of land and construction of public boat ramps.**

Objective 1-C: Preserve the historic resources and archaeological sites that reflect the heritage and historical significance of Lancaster County.

The County’s historic buildings and other resources are an important part of the County’s identity and character and should be protected. Chapter 6 of the Plan notes the importance and benefits of historic preservation, and includes a partial listing of the County’s historic resources and a policy goal with four objectives for historic preservation. Additional strategies include the following:

Strategies:

- Provide property owners with information on how to have their properties included in the Virginia Landmarks Register or the National Register and how

to seek available Federal rehabilitation tax credits

- Create and maintain a computerized inventory, listing and map of all significant historic, cultural, architectural and archeological sites. The Virginia Department of Resources provides a resource for technical and financial assistance to local jurisdictions. Include all identified historic, cultural, archeological and architecturally significant sites on a map in the amended Comprehensive Plan.
- Require surveying, identifying and mitigating adverse impacts on proven historic resources as a condition for rezoning and special use permits.
- Encourage voluntary efforts for historic preservation, including donation of preservation easements by property owners.
- Utilize strategies such as brochures with local landmarks, local landmark signs, and driving tours.

Objective 1-D: Preserve open space and views along public roads and waterways.

County residents desire to retain the views along the County's roadways and are concerned over the potential impact of any type of development on these views.

Strategies:

- Promote land use practices to preserve the rural character and qualities of the County.
- Allow low intensity field crop farming as a by-right use in reserved open space areas.
- Allow efficient development patterns that prioritize preservation of open space, wooded areas, and other features
- Conditionally allow residential subdivisions to protect agricultural land and open space.
- Discourage commercial and residential sprawl along road corridors through inappropriate rezonings.
- The County has adopted a Highway Corridor Overlay District in its Zoning Ordinance which applies to Routes 3, 354, and 200 **and the James B. Jones Memorial Highway** (except within the town limits of Kilmarnock, White Stone, and Irvington.) Revise the Historic Corridor Overlay District to better protect the rural character and to encourage appropriate development. In order to preserve the County's rural character and minimize the impact of nonresidential and multifamily development on the rural aesthetic, the HCOD standards should be enhanced to promote a development pattern that acknowledges and supports this policy goal.
- Provide incentives to retain stands of trees, open spaces, and other buffer areas. Incentives may include lot size flexibility or site layout flexibility in exchange for increased buffering from the roadway.
- **Develop a buffer ordinance that applies only to residentially zoned parcels and which protects open space views.**
- **Develop an ordinance which protects and preserves the 1000**

foot vistas along public roadways.

- Encourage the use of conservation easements and land trusts to help preserve open space, farmland, and undeveloped natural areas along the County’s roadways and waterways.
- **Establish a County administered land trust to hold conservation easements and land trusts for smaller parcels.**

2. QUALITY GROWTH

The County desires to **encourage well-managed growth as its rural nature and pristine waterfront areas continue to become more attractive to a larger numbers of retirees, to discourage sprawl-like development occurring in the County, and to steer future development to the most appropriate locations within the County. The County also wishes to encourage development that is consistent with the rural nature of the County, preserves the natural beauty of the County’s land areas and shoreline, and which ensures careful development of waterfront areas in a manner that will reduce the risk of water quality degradation in the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries.** The County’s Future Land Use Map shows the desired location and pattern of future land use, including the type and intensity of new residential, commercial or industrial development. Character areas **have been identified to describe desired land use patterns and characteristics and to serve as a guide for future land use decisions.**

Ensure orderly and well-managed land use that protects the County’s natural beauty, quality of life and its communities.

Character Areas

A Primary Growth Area (PGA) includes existing locations of the highest level of residential, commercial, and employment activity with the highest level of existing public infrastructure, including public water and sewer. Most community services, such as hospitals and places of higher education, are located in the PGA. The primary centers of commercial and development activity in the County are the three towns of Kilmarnock, White Stone and Irvington. The unincorporated area located between the towns, in a roughly triangular shape, **as delineated in the accompanying land use map,** is designated as the Primary Growth Area (PGA) for the County. The vast majority of all new higher density residential and intensive commercial activity will be directed to the Primary Growth Area. **However, to protect the water quality of the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries and to ensure that controlled low**

density development is permitted along County waterways, high density development will not be permitted within areas now designated as part of the Waterfront Overlay District, although those areas may be physically located within the PGA. Generally, appropriate development in the PGA includes **medium**-density single-family housing (2-4 units per acre), multi-family housing (4-6 units per acre), small to large commercial and retail activity, offices, industrial parks, and warehousing and distribution facilities.

Secondary Growth Areas are appropriate for concentrating **low density residential** and commercial development. **These are designated on the accompanying land use map.**

Generally, appropriate development in the SGAs includes **low density single family housing** (1-2 dwelling units per acre), small to medium-scale retail activity, offices, and light manufacturing. **However, to protect the water quality of the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries and to ensure that controlled very low density development is permitted along County waterways, such development as defined above will not be permitted within areas now designated as part of the Waterfront Overlay District, although those areas may be physically located within the SGA.**

Designated Rural Areas include those areas that the County wants to retain as farmland and open space. These areas are also suitable for forests and forestry, parks and recreational space.

The primary policy for areas of the County that are designated as “Rural Areas” is to preserve and maintain agricultural and forestal activities, to protect ground and surface water supplies and to conserve natural historic and scenic resources. Land uses that conflict with this policy objective should be discouraged. When nonagricultural uses extend into agricultural areas, conflicts increase. Farm and forest landowners many times become the victims of nuisance complaints or lawsuits, which have the effect of decreasing the viability of agricultural and forestal activities. Residential land use at a density that is detrimental to agricultural and forestal activity should be discouraged. In recognition of the agricultural landowners' right to farm and engage in silvicultural practices without being restricted by neighboring residential uses.

A preferred minimum residential lot size should be established (Three acres is recommended) that is consistent with preserving open space in an agricultural and forested environment, and it is recommended that Open Space Site Design principles⁴ be followed for the residential parcels.

Residential areas include primarily those areas in the County that have already been approved for residential development or have been developed for residential use. Recognizing that many of these areas have already been developed, new development in

the vicinity should recognize existing defined development patterns and be sensitive to established context. Residential areas are located in proximity to the larger towns and concentrations of development. **A preferred minimum residential lot size should be established (Three acres is recommended) that is consistent with preserving open space in a rural environment.**

Reservoir overlay districts include eight potential impoundment or reservoir sites identified in a 1973 study. These sites will be carefully managed, and decisions will be reached on which of these sites and their adjoining watersheds should be protected from intensive development. Ensuring an adequate supply of drinking water is important, as the County is entirely dependent on groundwater for its drinking supply and there are well founded concerns that groundwater alone is insufficient to accommodate the County's needs. Appropriate activities in these areas are those with a relatively small "footprint" such as low-intensity agricultural and timbering uses, open air and low-polluting commercial and industrial uses such as timber storage, and very low density residential development. Uses with high infrastructure and capital investment costs are discouraged from locating within areas identified as potential reservoir sites.

Historic Districts and Places include sites and buildings that are listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the Virginia Landmarks Register and other identified areas of historic or archeological significance.

Industrial/Employment includes locations most suitable for warehousing and storage facilities, light manufacturing plants and some public facilities. Heavy industrial and manufacturing activities with a significant noise, air quality, water quality, and visual impact, as well significant impact on county roads, are not considered appropriate for Lancaster County.

Public Parks and Recreation includes publicly owned or controlled parkland and recreational sites.

Public Lands and Facilities

This category includes all publicly owned lands such as County or State offices, schools, libraries and fire stations and any publicly-owned or controlled water access points.

Towns/Incorporated Areas

This category includes the three towns of Kilmarnock, White Stone and Irvington.

Objective 2-A: Concentrate new and orderly development in areas of the County most suitable for new growth

- The Future Land Use Map shows the desired future land use patterns in the County. Future development and land use decisions should be consistent with the Future Land Use Map and character areas.
- Concentrate higher-density commercial and residential development in appropriate areas, particularly around existing towns.

- Discourage development of areas with poor soils, high water tables, steep slopes or areas with other environmental constraints.
- Promote and participate in the development of a Regional Land Use Plan for compatible land use at the borders of jurisdictions.

Objective 2-B: New development should complement and enhance the existing quality and character of existing neighborhoods and communities.

- Evaluate rezonings and conditional use permit applications to ensure consistency with the Comprehensive Plan and compatibility with the character of the surrounding area.
- Ensure that the scale, character and density of new development is compatible with adjacent land uses.
- Encourage development with design features such as varied building orientation and setback, lot size, façade treatment, open space and landscaping to help avoid the visual repetition of suburban sprawl.
- Reduce the number of permitted uses in existing zoning districts to avoid mixed, incompatible uses within a zoning district.

Objective 2-C: The County should ensure the provision of adequate water supply by protecting potential future reservoir sites.

- Eight potential impoundment or reservoir sites were identified in a 1973 study. Preserving these sites to meet future demand is very important for a County that is entirely dependent on groundwater for its drinking supply. The County should create a special reservoir overlay zone to protect the impoundment areas from encroaching development.
- **Create a new or join an existing State Water Management area.**

3. RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Lancaster County needs additional recreational facilities and opportunities, including bicycle and pedestrian paths and trails.

Goal: Provide a range of recreational facilities and activities to accommodate the needs of all County residents

Objective 3-A: Develop a comprehensive system of pathways and trails suitable for use by bicyclists, pedestrians, and horse riders

Chapter 6 states the County has adopted a series of Class III (shared with the existing roadway) bikeways which extend throughout the County and includes a related map, *Bicycle Trails of Lancaster County*, with a plan for bikeway improvements. Lancaster County should use this existing Bicycle Trails Plan as the basis for developing a more comprehensive county-wide multi-use trail, bicycle and pedestrian system. The system

would serve both short-distance trips between neighborhoods and nearby services, and also longer-distance transportation and recreational users.

Strategies:

- Expand upon the Bicycle Trails Plan to develop a comprehensive County-wide Bicycle and Pedestrian Trails Program with a prioritized list of improvements for implementation.
- Inventory and map existing bikeways, sidewalks and trails to determine location and condition as the starting point for the County-wide Bicycle and Pedestrian Trails Program.
- Include the action steps in Chapter 6 (Section B. Highways, 3. Planned Highway Improvements by VDOT, C. Bicycle Trail) in the Bicycle and Pedestrian Trails Program. Bike paths and sidewalks will be considered in the design of improved and new road projects. Small projects such as painting bike lane stripes on existing roadways with sufficient pavement width, minor grading, gravel compaction, and vegetation trimming will be undertaken as a means of improving safety and utility. Consistent with the plan, additional grant funding will be sought to carry out such larger projects as bridge widening, separate path construction, and shoulder paving.
- Encourage developers to construct bikeways and sidewalks for transportation and recreation purposes.
- **Seek the use of Utility rights-of-way for bicycle and walking trails.**

Objective 3-B: Develop a Parks and Recreation Program

Chapter 6 identifies existing publicly and privately-owned recreational sites and facilities. It also includes a list of standards for a range of recreational facilities including baseball and softball fields, basketball, tennis and swimming pools and notes that these standards “may be adjusted as appropriate for Lancaster County.” One way in which the County’s population is distinctly different from the rest of the state is its relatively high percentage of residents over the age of 65, estimated to be almost 30% in the 2000 US Census versus 11% statewide. Demographic trends such as these suggest that the County needs to take additional steps to better identify the recreational opportunities that are most appropriate and desired by residents.

Strategies

- Establish a citizen’s committee charged with making recommendations for projects and improvements to be included in the Parks and Recreation Master Program with a prioritized list of desired improvements and facilities.
- Conduct an inventory of the current publicly-owned and privately-owned recreational facilities that are accessible to the public.
- Survey County residents to determine recreation needs and priorities
- Use the Program as a basis for identifying proffers for development or redevelopment
- Many citizens identified improved public access to the water as a desired element of recreational opportunities in the County. The ‘Public and Private

Access to Waterfront Areas Plan' in Chapter 5 includes several goals and objectives to improve public access to water, and should serve as the basis for this element of the County's Parks and Recreation Program.

- **Apply for funds from the Saltwater License Fund at the Virginia Marine Resources Commission to be used for the purchase of land and construction of public boat ramps**

Objective 3-C: New waterfront development or redevelopment should preserve the natural beauty of shoreline areas and minimize the risk of degradation to the water quality of the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries.

Strategies:

- **Continue careful management of all waterfront development, including adherence to requirements of both the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act and the County's Waterfront Overlay District.**
- **Develop additional protective land use policies and zoning regulations that will encourage the use of Low Impact Design (LID) and Best Management Practices (BMP's) on the waterfront.**
- **Limit high-density waterfront development to areas that are outside the County's Waterfront Overlay District and located in very close proximity to existing population centers with requisite supporting infrastructures, and where development can be accomplished with minimal adverse environmental impact.**

4. DIVERSE COMMUNITIES

Lancaster County needs more 'affordable' or 'workforce' housing in the County along with the need for a diverse housing stock. About 84% of the approximately 614 residential building permits issued in the County between 2000 and 2005 were for single-family residential units. Additionally, much of the new development was and continues to be located on very expensive waterfront areas. According to the 2000 Census, about 3.2% of existing homes in the County were in multi-unit structures, as compared to over 21% statewide. The great majority of land in the County is zoned for large-lot development (one dwelling unit per one or per two acres).

Lancaster County desires to retain its traditional diverse and eclectic housing stock and communities, with a range of housing types and income levels located in close proximity, as an important component of community character.

Goal: Provide a range of housing options and types to preserve the diversity of the County's communities and to meet the housing needs of County residents

Objectives 4-A: To Insure provision of Safe, Affordable Housing in Lancaster County

Strategies:

- 1. Conduct a regional housing needs inventory;**
- 2. Survey and publicize the needs identified in the needs inventory.**
- 3. Work with lending institutions, state and federal agencies, and private parties to increase affordable home ownership opportunities and publicize them widely.**

OBJECTIVE 4-B: REHABILITATE THE COUNTY'S SUBSTANDARD HOUSING STOCK

Strategy:

- 1. Support efforts to provide safe, sanitary and decent housing for the residents of Lancaster County.**

OBJECTIVE 4-C: PROMOTE AFFORDABLE RENTAL UNITS AT A SCALE AND IN LOCATIONS CONSISTENT WITH THE COUNTY'S GROWTH MANAGEMENT POLICY

Strategy:

- 1. Encourage the availability of rental units accepting Section 8 certificates and vouchers.**

Planning Process

In addition to land use issues, the County will improve the planning process itself, increasing opportunities for public participation in land use decision making, and improving the link between the Comprehensive Plan and the Zoning Ordinance. The County will also seek better coordination on land use planning between the County and the three towns.

Plan Implementation

Lancaster County has limited planning resources and staff, and like all other jurisdictions, many demands for public funds. Nevertheless, with public input, the County will develop an implementation program for the Plan, with short-term, mid-term and long-term priorities. A Plan Advisory Committee should be created and charged with annual progress review and reports on the implementation program.

Lancaster County is fortunate to have a large number of citizens who are committed ensuring the overall quality of life in the County over the future. The County will utilize this resource by creating various citizen task forces charged with assisting to implement various elements of the Plan. These task forces will include representation from all perspectives of the County.

Definitions:

***Agricultural* generally refers to land that is, or has been, used for agricultural activity and has not been developed for higher intensity uses.**

***Very Low Density Residential* generally refers to single-family detached houses at a density of less than one dwelling unit per acre.**

***Low Density Residential* generally refers to single-family detached houses at a density of one or two dwelling units per acre.**

***Medium Density Residential* generally refers to a variety of housing types (i.e. single-family or two-family, townhouses, multi-family, manufactured) at a density of three to six dwelling units per acre.**

***High Density Residential* generally refers to any housing type at a density of more than six dwelling units per acre.**

***Affordable Housing* Housing that takes no more than 30% of a household's monthly income for a household earning up to 80% of the County's median income as determined annually from the preceding tax year.**