

## I. INTRODUCTION

Hereinafter, no action of the community affecting public facilities identified in the comprehensive plan shall be determined until the local commission has reviewed and found it to be substantially in accord with the plan. Nothing inherent in the Comprehensive Plan, however, shall restrict the Board of Supervisors in the exercise of their authority and responsibility to change or modify the Comprehensive Plan for actions under the zoning and subdivision ordinance of Louisa County as prescribed by Title 15.2, Chapter 22 of the Code of Virginia.

The Board of Supervisors reserves the right, pursuant to the procedures and requirements set forth in state law, to change any portion of this plan, at its discretion. All of the material contained in this plan is considered a suggestion and a guide, and in no way shall anything in this plan affect the discretion of the Board of Supervisors to amend any portion of this plan or to otherwise act in the best interest of the County.

The Louisa County Comprehensive Plan is the culmination of the efforts of the citizens attending the Vision Forum and the eight citizen task force committees appointed by the Louisa County Board of Supervisors to develop plans and strategies to guide the County into the future. These Task Force committees developed topical reports, which formed the basis for chapters in the Plan. Louisa County citizens clearly articulated their hopes for the future in the Vision Statement. Retaining the rural character of the County, while accommodating growth and diversifying the tax base, are important to the quality of life for Louisa County citizens. This basic statement guided the development of the Task Force committee reports and Plan.

In addition, many citizens made their views and hopes known to their supervisors, whom they have entrusted to finalize and implement this Plan in a reasonable way.- The Plan is meant to be a guide, a resource to be consulted in land use decisions, but not the final arbiter of those decisions. Each land use decision must ultimately be decided on its own merits, with the Plan and the needs of the County at that time as the primary factors to be considered.<sup>22</sup>

The Comprehensive Plan encapsulates the vision for Louisa County, as articulated by its citizens, and identifies the areas in the County, which are appropriate for growth, conservation, agriculture, forestry, and industry. The Louisa Comprehensive Plan is a living document that may undergo continuous review and modification to provide additional detail and to insure the Plan remains a useful and valid guide for the future. Several in-depth sub-area plans are referenced in the Plan. The Plan provides the framework for these future studies, these areas along Route 64 including Zion Crossroads, Gum Spring, and Shannon Hill are appropriate for such a variety of uses as well as the area around Gordonsville.

Louisa County residents have a clear sense of the importance of the natural and built environment in which they live and work. They cherish the rural character of the County and appreciate the growth centers for more urban needs.

The Citizen Task Forces were unanimous in proposing a growth management based Comprehensive Plan. This direction was reinforced in all public meetings held regarding the Plan. The concepts and tools are imbedded in each section of the Plan to provide clear direction for the future.

This plan is based on the concept that Growth Management, which is the use by a community of a wide range of techniques in combination to permit it to determine its own amount, type, and rate of growth and to channel it into designated areas. Growth Management will provide Louisa County with the best tools to reach the Vision.

Growth Management will:

- direct anticipated and desired growth to areas the County can serve efficiently with appropriate levels of public service;
- increase the efficiency of County government; and
- preserve and protect the rural character of the County which, in addition to the people of the County, is the County's major resource and strength.

Growth management is to be a reality in the creation and definition of growth centers and rural areas. The approach is woven into all aspects of the Plan to provide Louisa County residents with maximum efficiency in government and preservation of its valuable natural and built resources

Louisa County participates in a number of regional planning activities: The Lake Anna Special Area Plan, the Regional Area Transportation Plan, the Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission, the Thomas Jefferson Venture (the area's Regional Competitiveness Act strategic planning group), the Thomas Jefferson Sustainability Council, the Eastern Planning Initiative, and the Zion Crossroads Development Initiative. The Plan brings a number of current regional planning activities into a local context, linking Louisa County planning with planning in its neighboring jurisdictions, recognizing the commonality of issues and the added value of working together on issues of mutual concern and interest.

## **THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

### *THE PURPOSE OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN*

The Louisa County Comprehensive Plan is a legal public document that has been drafted by the Comprehensive Plan Task Forces, as appointed by the County Board of Supervisors, for review and recommendations from the Planning Commission and adoption by the Board of Supervisors. The Code of Virginia (Section 15.2-2230) requires the review and update of the County's Comprehensive Plan on a five year basis. The Plan, as adopted by the Board of Supervisors, serves as a long-range (20-30 year) guide for growth management, land use and resource management decision-making.

A Comprehensive Plan, while general in nature, provides the basis for the development of zoning, site plan, and subdivision ordinances. The Plan is not

parcel specific, but establishes guidelines for general areas for certain activities. The overall purpose of the Comprehensive Plan is to enable the citizens and government officials to anticipate and constructively deal with change and growth in the community and to encourage the advancement of a safe, healthy, orderly and distinctive living environment.

### *THE 2001 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN PROCESS*

The Comprehensive Plan process was initiated by the Louisa County Board of Supervisors in January 1999. In April 1999, the Board appointed eight task force committees comprised of representatives from all areas of the County, and directed them to review pertinent data and prepare a document to guide the future of Louisa County.

The initial meeting of all Task Force members, Planning Commissioners, and Supervisors was held in May 1999. Dr. Michael Chandler of Virginia Tech and Bruce Dotson of the University of Virginia briefed the participants about the importance of the Comprehensive Plan in the governing of a locality and the value of having a Vision or desired future toward which the County and its residents can strive. A presentation of relevant demographic data completed the presentations. This information has been incorporated into the Plan.

A Visioning Forum, held in June 1999, was attended by nearly 100 people from the County. From the deliberations of the Forum, a Vision Statement, Goals, and Objectives were developed.

The Task Force Committees completed their work in September 1999. In addition to the respective committee reports, the committees gathered and organized the data necessary to illuminate the past and project into the future of Louisa County. This information provides the background for the recommendations developed by these committees.

Three public discussions of the draft summary of the Plan, the Vision and Goals were held in three different areas of the County. Citizens from the County participated in these discussions with members of the Board of Supervisors and the Planning Commission.

As the respective task force committee reports were being developed, a three-county committee was developing the Lake Anna Special Area Plan. The work of the Special Area Plan Committee is an appendix to this plan. The Louisa County portion of the Regional Area Transportation Study is also incorporated.

The involvement of the community in preparing the Comprehensive Plan is indicative of the wealth of knowledge and expertise resident in the County, as well as the dedication of its citizens. This is a model for future involvement. Advancing technology offers additional means to communicate between government and citizens and should be continually explored and used. The Louisa County Web Site has played an important role in sharing information on the Plan as it has evolved.

## **HISTORICAL SUMMARY OF LOUISA COUNTY**

It is said that in order to know where we are going, it is important to understand where we have been. The characteristics that make Louisa County the unique place it is today are the result of several generations of activity and dedication to rural values. The values of enterprise, industriousness, stewardship, and community are threads that are deeply woven in Louisa County's traditional fabric.

Prior to 1700, the inhabitants of the area now known as Louisa County were the Comasiccappacco Indians, one of the five tribes of the Monacan Indian Confederacy. Captain Christopher Newport and 120 of his men entered this Monacan territory in 1609 and began the English contact with the native inhabitants of the area. Wars between the colonists and the Indian tribes of Central Virginia forced the Indians out of the area by the late 17th century. When English settlers marked the land for the expansion of their colony, Louisa County was a part of Hanover County. It was separated from Hanover County in 1742 in order to provide greater access to government for the inhabitants of northern Hanover County. Louisa County was named in honor of Princess Louisa, the youngest daughter of George II of England and wife of Frederick V King of Denmark.

Louisa County has been the birthplace and home of many famous Virginians. When Thomas Jefferson was born in 1743, his paternal home at Shadwell was then in Louisa County. The birthplace of George Rogers Clark, now also in Albemarle County, was in Louisa County in 1752. Dabney Carr brother-in-law to Thomas Jefferson and Patrick Henry both represented Louisa County in the colonial House of Burgesses. The well-known naval architect Admiral David Taylor, Mississippi Governor George Poindexter, and Frederick Harris, the first president of what is now the C & O Railroad also are among the luminaries from the early history of the County. John Mercer Langston, Virginia's first black congressman, university president and U.S. minister to Haiti, is another famous son of Louisa County.

Many events important in colonial history, the Revolutionary and Civil wars, and early American industrial history are part of Louisa County's past. The famous ride of Jack Jouett from Cuckoo Tavern to Charlottesville in 1781, which saved Thomas Jefferson and the Virginia General Assembly from capture by the British, the Confederate victory at the Battle of Trevilians, and the establishment of the first east-west railroad in Virginia are among several notable historic events that took place in Louisa County.

The economy of the County has been based chiefly on agriculture since its formation in 1742. Under the early land patent and grant system, County land was divided into farms ranging in size from 10 to 6,000 acres. Over time, the size of these farms decreased as the population increased. Before the Emancipation in 1865, Louisa County had a high percentage of slaves. Most small farms owned one to five slaves, while large farms operated almost exclusively on slave labor. Major crops grown on these farms included tobacco, wheat, corn and oats. There

was a significant increase in the production of livestock, especially beef, after the Revolutionary War. The fertility of Louisa County soils made the County a major source of wheat for the United States and overseas markets during the early- to mid-nineteenth century. The Green Springs area in particular was known as the "Granary of the Confederacy." Agriculture continues to be an important economic activity and defining characteristic of the County.

Forestry and mining have been an important part of the economic history of the County since the eighteenth century as well. Pine, oak, walnut, maple and ash have been the main timber crops. Gold was actively mined in Louisa County until the end of the nineteenth century, and most of the gold mining took place along several branches of Contrary Creek. Other minerals that have been found in the County include silver, copper, lead, mica, sandstone, iron ore, zinc, granite, and quartz. Because of its large pyrite deposits, Louisa County was a national leader in the production of sulfur until 1918. In general, the line of active mines in the nineteenth century ran on a Northeast-Southwest line from Wares Cross Roads to Profitts Corner (now the intersection of Route 605 and Route 33). All of the mines in the County closed by 1920 due to economic failures and none of the old mining buildings have survived.

The Town of Louisa was chartered in 1893, although the settlement there had been a center of economic, political and social activity in the County since the establishment of the courthouse in the mid-eighteenth century. The Town of Mineral, the site of a settlement formerly known as Davis' Turnout, Tolersville, and then Mineral City, was incorporated in 1902. Mineral grew as various lumber and manufacturing industries located there.

In recent years, the construction of Interstate 64, the construction of the North Anna Nuclear Power Station, and the creation of the Lake Anna recreational and residential development have contributed to the increase in population and overall growth in the County. Despite the addition of the Industrial Air Park and other manufacturing firms in the mid-1970s, agriculture and forestry still play an important role in Louisa County's economy. Louisa County's rich and varied history is evident in the remarkable wealth of historic structures, sites and landscape features.

The first Subdivision Ordinance for Louisa County was adopted in December 1966, with an amendment in December 1997. The first Zoning Ordinance was adopted in June 1969; subsequent major revisions are dated August 1981 and May 1987. There have been periodic minor revisions between 1987 and 1997, with the latest major revisions performed in December 1997. An Erosion and Sedimentation Control Ordinance, originally adopted in September 1979, was revised in April 1991. The County's first Comprehensive Plan was completed in 1979. Since then, the plan was revised and adopted November 15, 1993, with amendments adopted October 5, 1998.

Special district designations in Louisa County include the formation of the Green Springs Historic District, a National Landmark Historic District, in 1973, and the designation of

Louisa County as a Certified Business Community in 1986. The County was recertified as a Business Community in 1990.