

# Introduction

## Introduction

This document, Luray's Town Plan: Vision 2027, is the comprehensive plan for the Town of Luray, Virginia. It was prepared under the direction and guidance of the Luray Planning Commission and Luray's Comprehensive Plan Committee. Work on the plan was initiated in the fall of 2006 and was completed in June of 2007.



A comprehensive plan is a long-range planning tool for a community. A good plan identifies local issues, evaluates local trends and conditions, and contains an overall community vision, goals, objectives, and strategies that help guide decision making and public investment. Good plans also contain time

frames for implementing major plan strategies. Time frames for implementation allow a community to evaluate its progress, and serve as a tool for measuring success.

To be effective and valid, a plan must be based upon the knowledge, values, and aspirations of a community's citizens. Community involvement was one of the guiding principles governing the preparation of this plan. A Comprehensive Plan Committee composed of local citizens was formed, a community-wide survey was distributed and analyzed, and two community work sessions were conducted – all of which were instrumental to the development of this plan and the long-term goals and objectives therein.

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This plan is an official public document adopted by Luray's Town Council on (DATE). This plan can be used as a long-term guide for decisions related to growth and development within the Town of Luray. Additionally, this plan can also be used as a general guide that outlines public priorities, and directs expenditures for public facilities and programs within the Town of Luray.

## Powers of the Plan

A comprehensive plan is an instrument that is designed to give a local jurisdiction within the Commonwealth of Virginia responsibility for managing development, services, and public infrastructure. The legal basis for the plan is established in the Code of Virginia, Section 15.2-2232, which states: *the local planning commission shall prepare and recommend a comprehensive plan for the physical development of the territory within its jurisdiction...to achieve a coordinated, adjusted and harmonious development of territory which will, in accordance with present and probable future needs and resources, best promote the health, safety, morals, order, convenience, prosperity, and general welfare of the inhabitants.*

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According to the Code, the comprehensive plan is general in nature and may include, but is not limited to, the designation of land use, transportation systems, community facilities and services, historic areas, etc. The Code also identifies methods of implementations, such as zoning ordinances or a map of zoning districts, a subdivision ordinance and a capital improvements plan.

A comprehensive plan can include a concise vision statement for the community accompanied by goals for long-range development, as well as objectives for implementing the goals. The goals provide general directions based on the aspirations of the community. Objectives provide further directions for achieving as aspect of a goal.

*“The full implementation of some of the Plan objectives will necessitate modifications of certain ordinances and regulations.”*

Luray’s Town Plan serves those purposes for the Town of Luray. More particularly, it serves as a general guide for the Town Council in its legislative role, the Planning Commission in its advisory role, and Town staff, citizens, and land-owners with

respect to directing development in the Town.

This Plan contains goals and objectives that are designed to guide land use and development decisions. The full implementation of some of the Plan objectives will necessitates modifications of certain ordinances and regulations.

### **2006 - 2007 Town Plan Process**

Between 1995 and 2005, various updates of the 1993 Comprehensive Plan were undertaken. In July of 2006, Luray’s Town Council began a significant review of the 1993 Comprehensive Plan, and directed Town staff to proceed with a complete revision of the Town’s comprehensive plan.

In August of 2006, the Town Council appointed seven citizens to serves on the “Comprehensive Plan Committee” (CPC). This Committee would serve in an advisory capacity to the Town’s Planning Commission, and work in conjunction with Town staff and a hired planning consultant,

Greg Baka Land Planning, to formulate the updated comprehensive plan.



**A member of the CPC gathering citizen input during a community work session.**

During the fall and winter of 2006 and 2007, the CPC aggressively canvassed the citizens of the Town for their input using a variety of methods. In November of 2006 a community-wide survey was distributed and analyzed; and in February of 2007, two “community works sessions” were held in which detailed input was solicited from the general public. The goals and objectives formulated in this Plan were significantly influenced by the citizen input gathered from the community-wide survey and community work sessions.

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The draft plan was delivered to the CPC in May of 2007. Based on discussions at several work sessions, a revised draft plan was prepared, and submitted to the Town's Planning Commission in June 13, 2007. This draft plan was the subject of public hearing before the Planning Commission in July of 2007. The Planning Commission submitted its final draft of the Plan to the Town Council, which held a public hearing on September 10, 2007. Based on that public hearing, the Town Council adopted this Town Plan effective on September 10, 2007.

### **Planning Horizon**

The year 2027 was chosen as the planning horizon for this document.

By law, this comprehensive plan shall be reviewed by Luray's Planning Commission at least once every five years. Each of these future plan reviews can serve as the basis to formally evaluate Luray's progress and community success, and the continued appropriateness of the plan's goals, objectives, and strategies.

### **Development of the Plan's Goals, Objectives and Strategies**

During the winter and spring of 2007, the CPC took on the task of developing goals, objectives, and strategies for the plan. Eight task groups were formed. Each CPC member served on one or more task group. The membership of each of the task group comprised of a CPC member and advised by Town staff and a planning consultant. These task groups developed goals, objectives, and strategies in the areas of:

- Land Use
- Natural Resources
- Housing
- Community Design
- Community Facilities
- Economic Development
- Transportation

### **Plan Implementation and Monitoring**

Luray's Town Plan is a dynamic document, which should be actively used by the Town Council, the Planning Commission, Town staff, and the public at large to formulate and guide decisions about the built and natural environments.

In order to ensure that the Plan has a dynamic character, the community and Town government need to review the Plan on a frequent basis, perhaps more often than the five year mandate by the Code of Virginia given the pressure for increased development in Luray and Page County. Citizen participation in the planning process is a critical element in making Luray's Town Plan successful.

There are a number of mechanisms for implementing the Town's planning goals and objectives. Some of these are described on the next page:

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### **The Comprehensive Plan:**

The Plan itself is a mechanism for defining and implementing the Town's planning goals. The Plan's goals and objectives are considered when evaluating rezonings, special use permits, and ordinance amendments. The Plan contains specific guidance for the Town's decision makers regarding land use, housing, downtown development, transportation, natural resources, community design, community facilities and recreation, and economic development.

### **The Zoning Ordinance:**

The Zoning Ordinance is adopted in order to protect the health, safety and welfare of the residents of Luray. It is intended that the Ordinance will be consistent with the goals and objectives of Luray's Town Plan. Within the Ordinance are regulations for specific aspects of development and redevelopment, such as land use, type of building and building height, bulk, and setback; size of lots; parking and signs.

Some uses are allowed by right and others may require a special use permit. There are a series of zoning districts generally related to type of development and land use, each with specific requirements. Several objectives of this plan will require Zoning Ordinance amendments in order to administer intent and vision.

### **Subdivision Regulations:**

The Town's Subdivision regulations are the governmental instrument that provides procedures and regulations for the subdivision and development of land within the Town. The intent of the Subdivision regulations is to encourage the development of safe and attractive residential neighborhoods and nonresidential developments; ensure the provisions of appropriate public street access between and among adjacent properties; ensure adequate provisions for drainage and appropriate arrangements of buildings and parking areas on the site within nearby properties; obtain public right-of-way, easements and other public land dedications; maintain appropriate buffers between potentially incompatible land uses; discourage development on steep slopes and in floodplains. All of these regulations are encouraged to be consistent with Luray's Town Plan.