

SHAPING OUR FUTURE

■ Our Plan

Shaping Henry County is Henry County's Comprehensive Plan. The Comprehensive Plan is the County's long-range planning document that serves as a guide for future growth and development of the community. While it is not regulatory, the Plan, based on the vision and values of the community, is used by County staff, appointed officials, elected officials, and others as a decision-making tool and policy guide.

The Plan describes the community's vision for Henry County over the next 20 years and includes goals, strategies, and implementation measures to achieve the community's objectives. The Plan addresses a wide range of topics related to development and land use including transportation, housing and neighborhoods, parks and open space, community facilities and services, economic development, and community character. Together, these elements provide the policy direction to help achieve our vision for Henry County.

Legal Basis for Comprehensive Plans

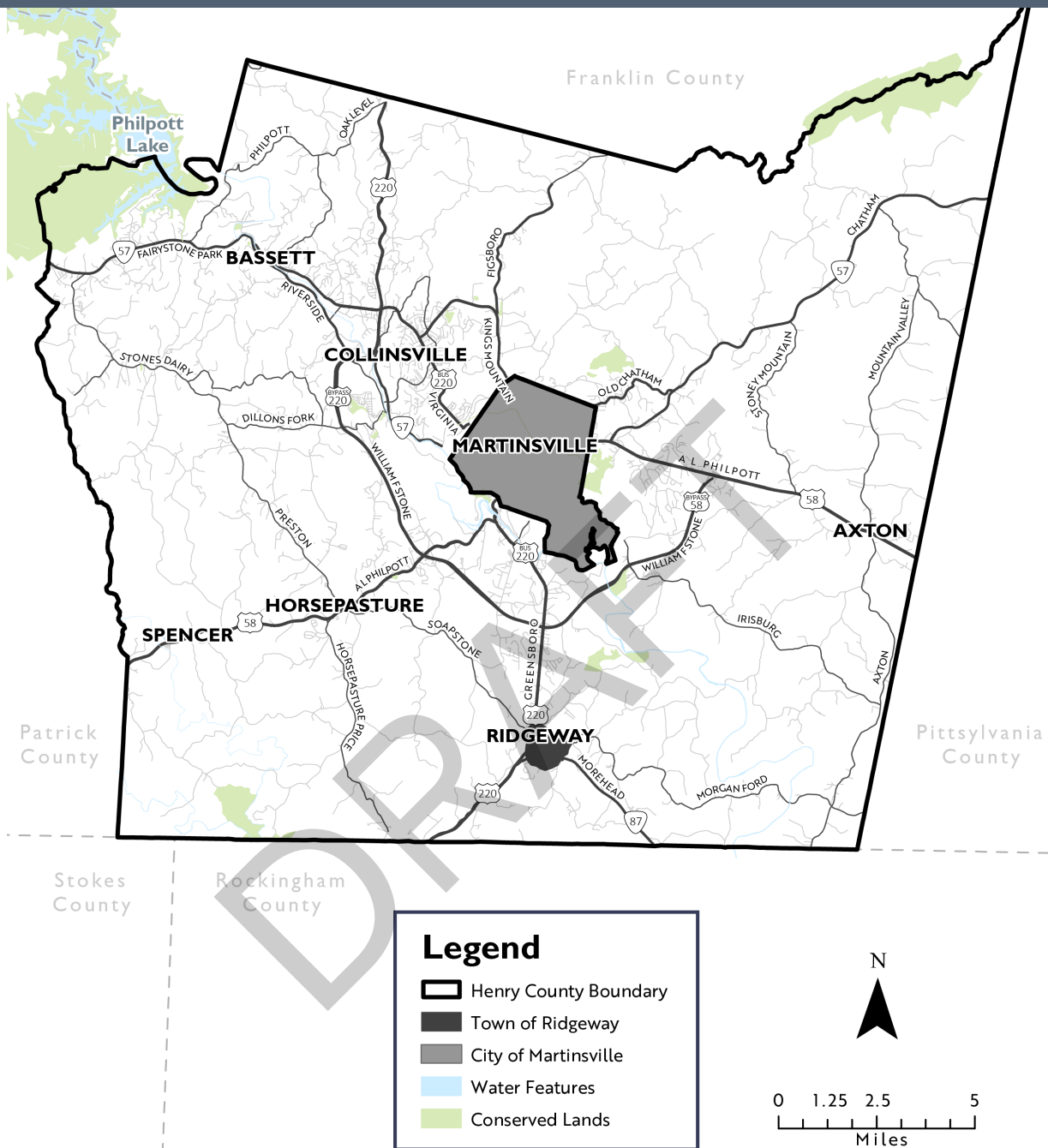
Every locality in Virginia is required by the Code of Virginia to adopt a Comprehensive Plan. Code of Virginia § 15.2-2223 and § 15.2-2224, among others, outline the required and optional Plan elements and offer a general framework for plan activities. Typical elements of the Comprehensive Plan, include, but are not limited to:

- » Future land use planning maps and recommendations for development.
- » A comprehensive system of transportation facilities, including maps and cost estimates for improvements.
- » A system of community service facilities.
- » Areas and implementation measures for the construction, rehabilitation, and maintenance of a variety of attainable housing options.
- » Strategies to provide broadband infrastructure.
- » Urban development areas appropriate for higher density development, redevelopment, and infill.
- » State requirements for Comprehensive Plans also recognize that community development is on-going and ever-changing. For this reason, Code of Virginia § 15.2-2230 requires localities to review the Comprehensive Plan every five years and amend as needed to ensure its continued applicability and usefulness to the community.



VIRGINIA CODE §15.2-2223

"The Comprehensive Plan shall be made with the purpose of guiding and accomplishing a coordinated, adjusted and harmonious development of the 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, including the elderly and persons with disabilities."



Planning Jurisdiction

The Comprehensive Plan applies to Henry County's official planning jurisdiction, which ends at County boundaries (Map 1.1). However, responsible regionalism and partnerships with neighboring jurisdictions are important in effectively shaping the County's future. As such, the Plan recognizes and prioritizes collaboration with its regional partners as a vital aspect of long-range planning. Development, demographic, and economic trends in the County's neighboring localities – particularly the City of Martinsville – influence quality of life and

land use patterns in the County. While the County does not have political jurisdiction over decisions in its neighboring localities, it works as a partner of the West Piedmont Planning District Commission (WPPDC) – a regional organization that provides planning services and technical assistance to its member jurisdictions. Much of the information in this Plan builds on existing regional studies and efforts, and many of the strategies will require regional coordination to shape the future of Henry County.



Relationship to Other Plans & Ordinances

Shaping Henry County is an organizing document for other plans, policies, and ordinances. The Comprehensive Plan includes data, ideas, and recommendations from many existing plans, studies, and strategic documents. The Comprehensive Plan informs and influences future updates to land development regulations and decisions. Zoning matters, capital improvements, transportation projects, and environmental and historic resource protection initiatives rely on the content of the Comprehensive Plan.

Zoning & Subdivision Ordinance

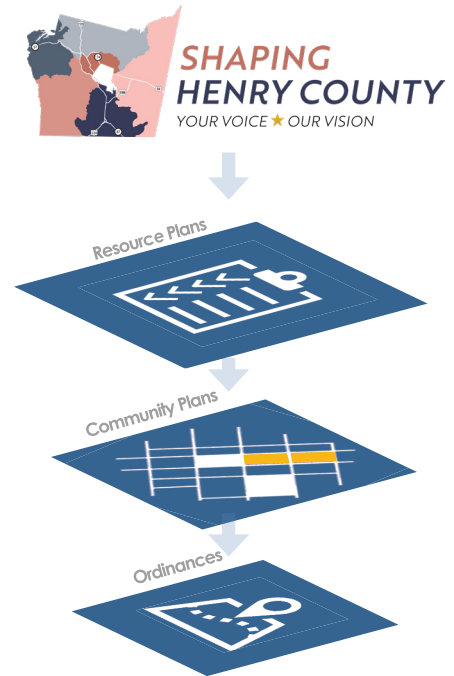
Henry County's zoning and subdivision ordinances are the primary tools used to implement the Comprehensive Plan. While the Comprehensive Plan offers vision, policy, and future land use recommendations, zoning and subdivision regulations directly control the location, form, and character of development. The Comprehensive Plan should guide updates to the zoning and subdivision ordinances. In addition, when a development or rezoning application is submitted to the County, decision makers must ensure that the application meets the specific standards of County ordinances and contributes to the implementation of the Comprehensive Plan.

Capital Improvement Plan

The Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) is the County's resource and fiscal management process that coordinates the location, timing, and financing of capital improvements over a multi-year period. Capital improvements are major, non-recurring infrastructure and equipment projects. The community's goals and long-range vision are achieved when the priorities of the CIP align with the County's Comprehensive Plan.

Other Plans, Studies, & Initiatives

Shaping Henry County encompasses multiple community plans, studies, and initiatives to ensure regional coordination. Existing plans and studies considered in the development are listed in the appendix of this document.





Creating Our Plan

Shaping Henry County is the culmination of nearly two years of research, data analysis, and most importantly, community input and engagement. Throughout the planning process, this Comprehensive Plan update has taken deliberate steps to guarantee that community voices define the County's vision and goals for today and tomorrow. The County can continue to look for ways to promote this Plan and engage the community as partners in its implementation.

Community Engagement

Community engagement is the backbone of successful planning processes. The Plan update process aimed to engage the community at every stage of plan development with an intensive data gathering effort during phase one that included a public survey, focus groups, three workshops, and online engagement. Complete results of the engagement process are documented in Part 3 of this Plan.

Plan Drafting

The Henry County Planning Commission is responsible for reviewing and recommending the proposed update to the Comprehensive Plan, as directed in Code of Virginia §15.2-2223.

Plan drafting was conducted through a collaborative approach between County staff and the Berkley Group. The Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors reviewed drafts and provided input and guidance during bi-monthly joint worksessions.

Public Review & Adoption

The Plan included a public review and refinement period to ensure the Plan accurately represents

the community's concerns and has developed a path to address them. The draft plan was made public for review to solicit public opinion and the County hosted a Public Open House to gather feedback on the drafted plan.

With the inclusion of changes suggested during the public refinement period, the revised draft Plan was made available for public review and considered by the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors through a formal public hearing process, as required by Code of Virginia.

Plan Implementation

Comprehensive plans are community documents used by a variety of individuals and stakeholders. A plan serves the community best when it is consistently used to make recommendations and decisions. While the Code of Virginia requires review of the Plan every 5 years, the Planning Commission should conduct annual reviews to identify necessary amendments and track progress. Reviews should analyze the implementation matrix and performance indicators to measure achievements and prioritize strategies to meet community goals.



In September 2024, Henry County launched the official website for the Comprehensive Plan update process. This website contained links to public engagement opportunities and useful resources, news posts and pertinent information, as well as an interactive map and idea wall where community members were encouraged to post on the interactive site to let the County know their thoughts regarding shaping the future of the County.