



# INTRODUCTION AND VISION

## CHAPTER 1

Fauquier County Board of Supervisors  
*Adopted August 13, 2015*



### I. Introduction

The Fauquier County Comprehensive Plan presents a long-range vision for the County. The Comprehensive Plan sets forth a guide for development within the County to promote, preserve and protect the health, safety and general welfare of its citizens. The purpose of this document is not to regulate, but rather to guide land use, transportation, infrastructure and resources decisions. The Comprehensive Plan is a vital tool in understanding and influencing outcomes, by providing direction to protect resources and permit orderly development, ensuring a continued quality of life for the citizens and businesses of Fauquier County.

The Comprehensive Plan is a living document that focuses on the next twenty years by providing guidance for development decisions. The Plan should be amended in response to new information or changes in circumstances, without straying from its underlying vision and goals.

#### Structure of the Plan

The Comprehensive Plan consists of a number of chapters that focus on particular aspects of the County's Vision for the future. While these chapters are unique in the focus of their contents, they are unified in promoting the County's Vision. To ensure that the contents outlined within each chapter contribute to achieving the Vision, a plan hierarchy has been utilized. The hierarchy starts in this chapter with the Vision Statement which represents the aspirational declaration of the County's primary goals for the long-term future to inform strategic decisions. This leads to the formation of Guiding Principles which are ideas that influence the formation of policies. The policies represent a statement of the County's course of action.

The hierarchy then continues into the individual chapters with their own vision statements that reference the County's Vision as well as the Guiding Principles and Policies. The chapters describe the current state of Fauquier County as well as where the County aspires to be in the future through the identification of goals as the desired long term target or outcome. These are then further delineated into objectives which are specific measurable results and the implementation actions which are the specific steps to achieve the goals and objectives. Visually, this hierarchy is as shown on the last page of this chapter.

### Vision Statement

*“Fauquier County is a thriving community that honors its natural and cultural resources, agricultural heritage and rural landscape while building a sustainable economy and promoting outstanding services and growth within defined service districts.”*

### Guiding Principles and Policies:

**Guiding Principle A: The County’s natural and cultural heritage are intrinsic to the County’s character.**

#### Policies:

1. Preserve the County’s cultural, ecological and environmental resources to ensure the continued quality of life within the County for its residents and visitors.
2. Identify and protect productive agricultural and silvicultural lands.
3. Promote the identification, evaluation, registration and protection of heritage/historic resources, as well as the business opportunities presented by their rehabilitation and reuse.
4. Use conservation easements, Purchase of Development Rights and the Land Use Taxation programs to protect these resources.
5. Safeguard the environment with water and air quality and natural resource management.

**Guiding Principle B: The County’s unique communities, from rural and agricultural to village settlements to urbanized, are integral to the County’s collective identity.**

#### Policies:

1. Identify special places in the County and support them through individualized plans.
2. Focus development within the areas of the County designated to have the infrastructure to serve higher density and intensity development.
3. Accommodate housing needs for all stages of life. This would involve a range of housing from affordable and accessible units for singles and young families just entering the housing market in the form of multi-family, townhouses and small single-family homes to larger homes as well as active adult and assisted care facilities.
4. Create communities consisting of varied housing types, civic buildings, shops and active and passive recreation within the service districts where people can live, work and play.
5. Provide quality recreational and cultural opportunities.

**Guiding Principle C: A strong and diverse local economy is necessary for the sustained vitality of the County.**

**Policies:**

1. Encourage and support the growth of existing businesses and investment of new businesses in the County and promote opportunities for Fauquier County residents to work in the County.
2. Continue to promote a vibrant and robust farming and agricultural sector of the economy.
3. Facilitate and promote broadband Internet, telecommunications infrastructure, fiber optics, and similar communications systems that provide communications support for businesses throughout the County.
4. Facilitate revitalization of older, underperforming commercial, office and industrial developments where supported by the County's land use plan.
5. Promote the rezoning of land to non-residential uses as designated by the Plan when proposed by developers willing to provide the necessary infrastructure.
6. Develop County gateway plans to encourage business and tourism and to promote Fauquier County as an attractive location.
7. Diversify and enhance tourism in the County.
8. Facilitate infrastructure to support business growth in areas of the County designated for development.
9. Monitor County ordinances to improve development review.

**Guiding Principle D: Effective public facilities and infrastructure are important components of a thriving community.**

**Policies:**

1. Encourage collaboration with the private sector to provide integrated infrastructure in the most efficient way possible.
2. Plan public facilities and infrastructure to meet the needs of the community as it grows.
3. Expect development projects seeking increased residential density and/or non-residential intensity to demonstrate that they maintain or improve the quality of infrastructure in the County.
4. Seek excellent educational and recreational opportunities.
5. Use a variety of transportation design and modal options to minimize the vehicular impacts of new development.
6. Encourage technology infrastructure throughout the County.

### Legal Basis for the Plan

The County's Planning Commission is responsible for preparing the elements of the Comprehensive Plan under the Virginia Code, Section 15.2-2223, which states in the pertinent parts:

"The local Planning Commission shall prepare and recommend a comprehensive plan for the physical development of the territory within its jurisdiction and every governing body shall adopt a comprehensive plan for the territory under its jurisdiction." The Code states that the purpose of the comprehensive plan is to achieve "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."

The Comprehensive Plan is intended to provide the framework to help the decision makers guide the County's future development. Section 15.2-2223 further states:

"The Comprehensive Plan shall be general in nature, in that it shall designate the general or approximate location, character and extent of each feature, including any road improvement and any transportation improvements and shall indicate where existing lands or facilities are proposed to be extended, widened, removed, relocated, vacated, narrowed, abandoned or changed in use as the case may be. As part of the Comprehensive Plan, each locality shall develop a transportation plan that designates a system of transportation infrastructure needs and recommendations that may include the designation of new and expanded transportation facilities that support the planned development of the territory covered by the plan and shall include, as appropriate, but not limited to roadways, bicycle accommodations, pedestrian accommodations, railways, bridges, waterways, airports, ports, and public transportation facilities."

Section 15.2-2224 states in part that, "The Comprehensive Plan shall recommend methods of implementation and shall include a current map of the area covered by the Comprehensive Plan."

### Amendment Process

Under Section 15.2-2229 the County Board of Supervisors may consider amendments to the Comprehensive Plan. The Comprehensive Plan is the document by which the County will evaluate rezoning and special use applications, public facility locations, and capital improvements for consistency with its development policies. If an application is determined to be inconsistent with the Comprehensive Plan, an amendment to the Comprehensive Plan may be considered. The application will be reviewed by the Planning Commission for consistency with the elements contained within the Plan. Applicants may initiate a Comprehensive Plan Amendment subject to the submission deadlines outlined by the County.

The applicant should demonstrate that any change in land use designation or density/intensity:

- would benefit the public health, safety and welfare;
- is consistent with the Goals, Objectives, and Policies of the Comprehensive Plan and appropriate Service District, if applicable;
- will not be detrimental to uses of property in the immediate vicinity of the subject property;
- has merit and value for the community as a whole; and
- will result in benefits (fiscal, aesthetic, employment, etc.) that will outweigh any significant impact of the change.

Comprehensive Plan Hierarchy Flow Chart

Chapter 1

**Vision**  
(Aspirational declaration of County's primary goals for the long-term future to inform strategic decisions)



**Guiding Principles**  
(Ideas that influence the formation of policies and goals)



**Policies**  
(Recommended course of action)



Individual Chapters

Chapter Vision Statement with summary of applicable Guiding Principles and Policies and their relation to the Vision



**Goals**  
(Desired long term target or outcome)



**Objectives**  
(Measurable, specific results)



**Implementation Actions**  
(How to achieve the goals and objectives)