

2023 Comprehensive Plan Update (Envision Hanover)

Staff Report

Board of Supervisors Date: September 13, 2023



Overview

The Comprehensive Plan is a long-range planning document that:

- Provides a basis for growth, development, and the provision of public infrastructure over the next 20 years.
- Is general and “comprehensive” in nature, covering a wide range of topics (land use, transportation, environmental issues, public facilities, etc.)

Once adopted, the plan serves as an advisory document that staff, the Planning Commission, and the Board of Supervisors consider when evaluating land use proposals and public infrastructure investments.

Every locality in Virginia is required to have a Comprehensive Plan, which must be reviewed every five years:

- The current Comprehensive Plan was adopted in February 2018.
- The Board of Supervisors authorized commencement of the Comprehensive Plan Update (also known as Envision Hanover) on June 23, 2021.

As a public planning document, it is developed based upon input provided by community stakeholders, including residents, businesses, and elected officials. Since authorization of the Comprehensive Plan Update, proposed revisions have been prepared based upon feedback received at approximately 20 in-person meetings and through various other virtual and in-person events held since January 2022.

On August 10, 2023, the Planning Commission held a public hearing regarding the draft Comprehensive Plan. After further discussion and changes to the text, the Planning Commission **recommended approval** of the draft plan (with changes) on August 17, 2023.

To finalize the document, the Board of Supervisors must hold a public hearing and adopt the Comprehensive Plan.

More information about the planning process can be found at www.envisionhanover.com.

Planning Process: Community Engagement

Not only does the planning process consider existing conditions, but the needs and desires of residents, businesses, and other stakeholders. Since January 2022, there have been multiple opportunities for members of the public to share their ideas for the future, with over 4,000 comments received. Public engagement activities were divided into multiple rounds:

- *Phase #1 Engagement*

Phase #1 Engagement, which lasted from January 1, 2022 through March 4, 2022, was intended to:

- Identify critical needs and issues that must be addressed through the planning process; and
- Identify common themes that should be reflected in the plan’s goals.

Four in-person, interactive open houses were held in February 2022, drawing 172 attendees. Another 25 people participated in a virtual open house held via Zoom, and 13 people spoke with the project team at drop-in events held at local libraries. Additionally, 392 people participated in an online survey (with content that mirrored the in-person events).

- *Visual Preference Survey*

Between April 25, 2022 and May 13, 2022, the public was given the opportunity to respond to an online visual preference survey. This survey allowed citizens and other stakeholders to provide their opinions regarding the design of future neighborhoods, employment areas, and development within Hanover County. There were 336 stakeholders that responded to the online survey.

- *Land Use Visioning*

In July and August 2022, two interactive workshops focusing on land use were held. At these workshops, participants heard a presentation regarding land use planning in Hanover County and divided into small groups (usually 4 to 5 people) to share their thoughts on potential changes to the General Land Use Plan. About 79 members of the public participated in these in-person workshops.

- *Topic Outreach + Plan Affirmation*

Throughout 2023, the public provided more detailed feedback regarding concepts and recommendations related to specific topic areas included within the plan:

- Topical Area Outreach: Part #1 (Land Use, Economic Vitality, and History + Culture) occurred in January and February 2023. There were five in-person meetings, three *Stop and Chat* events, and a webinar, with 220 event attendees total.
- Topical Area Outreach: Part #2 (Housing, Active Living, and Rural/Agricultural) occurred in April and May 2023. There were four in-person meetings, one *Stop and Chat* event, and a webinar, with 99 event attendees total.
- Topical Outreach: Part #3 (Transportation, Utilities + Community Facilities, and Environment + Resiliency) occurred in July 2023. There were four in-person meetings, one *Stop and Chat* event, and a webinar, with 109 event attendees total.

For each of these outreach periods, stakeholders could provide feedback in a variety of ways. There were 4 to 5 in-person meetings for each grouping of topics, where participants could listen to a presentation and then visit different stations devoted to each topic area. For those unable to attend an in-person meeting, there was a live webinar that presented similar information (with a recording posted on the County's YouTube page). Additionally, there were *Stop and Chat* events, where participants could ask the project team questions at informal office hours held at local libraries.

- *Land Use Awareness*

In May 2023, 1,759 letters were mailed to landowners whose properties were impacted by a proposed significant change to the General Land Use Plan. Additionally, signs were posted in areas where a significant change was proposed to the General Land Use Plan.

- *Community Participation Team*

The Community Participation Team (CPT) was formed to provide feedback throughout the planning process. The CPT included each member of the Planning Commission and one citizen appointee

from each magisterial district (up to 14 total members). The CPT met ten times between June 2022 and June 2023.

- *Other Outreach*

The project team shared information about the planning process by providing presentations to multiple community groups and having booths at Ashland Train Day (2022 + 2023), Ashland Strawberry Festival (2022), and the Tomato Festival (2022).¹ Additionally, there were multiple meetings at Brown Grove Baptist Church to develop land use recommendations for that area, which includes the recently-created Brown Grove Rural Historic District.

Throughout the planning process, stakeholders could access up-to-date information on the project website (www.envisionhanover.com). Public engagement events were promoted through mass emails, social media posts, and through traditional media outlets, with press releases and contributed articles in the Hanover Review (quarterly County newsletter), Mechanicsville Local, and other media outlets.

Based on the feedback received, guiding principles for the planning process were identified. These guiding principles influenced the plan’s goals, objectives, and implementation strategies.

Summary of Community Engagement: Guiding Principles
<p>Community Values</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Preserve rural character• Manage growth and direct development to areas with adequate infrastructure• Provide quality and diverse housing options at appropriate locations <p>Community Infrastructure and Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Maintain and enhance the transportation network to improve safety, reduce congestion, and provide safe opportunities for walking and biking• Maintain good schools• Provide more parks and recreational opportunities• Expand broadband access <p>Community Character</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Create vibrant places reflective of Hanover County’s rural character through the use of high-quality landscaping, architecture, and site design• Provide transitions between uses and place types to create harmonious communities• Protect and enhance rural villages and crossroads• Create attractive, well-planned residential neighborhoods with open space and landscaping integrated throughout• Accommodate high-quality commercial, industrial, and employment hubs near interstate interchanges and major corridors

¹Presentations to groups included presentations to the Pleasant Grove community, Covenant Woods, Hanover Master Gardener Association, Home Building Association of Richmond, and other local organizations.

Plan Concepts and Proposed Changes

The draft Comprehensive Plan includes twelve chapters:

- Chapter 1: Introduction
- Chapter 2: Community Overview
- Chapter 3: Land Use + Growth Management
- Chapter 4: Rural + Agriculture
- Chapter 5: Economic Vitality
- Chapter 6: Housing
- Chapter 7: Active Living
- Chapter 8: Transportation
- Chapter 9: Community Facilities + Utilities
- Chapter 10: History + Culture
- Chapter 11: Environment + Resiliency
- Chapter 12: Implementation

Chapter 4: Rural + Agriculture, Chapter 6: Housing, and Chapter 12: Implementation are not included in the 2018 Comprehensive Plan, but are new chapters incorporated into the draft Comprehensive Plan. Additionally, resiliency has been proposed as a subsection of the chapter that focuses on environmental issues.

In addition to the text, there is a draft Map Book that includes all of the maps referenced throughout the Comprehensive Plan, including the General Land Use Plan and Major Thoroughfare Plan.

Major concepts presented in the draft plan, along with some of the significant changes proposed, are described below.

General Changes

- Population forecast assumptions have been updated to reflect an anticipated growth rate of approximately 1% annually (on average), based upon recent growth trends.

Land Use and Growth Management

- The boundaries of the Suburban Service Area (SSA) are maintained as-is.
- The targeted distribution of residential growth (70% SSA/30% Rural) remains unchanged.
- The names and descriptions of the land use designations have been revised, and new land use designations were created (as described in the table below).
- For each land use designation, there are more detailed recommendations regarding the design and functionality of development. These recommendations address:
 - Recommended project size for some land use designations;
 - Recommended mix of uses;
 - Transportation and access (including pedestrian/bicycle accommodations);
 - Landscaping and buffering (including thoroughfare buffers and buffering between use types); and
 - Transitions between use types.

Proposed Land Use Designations

Existing Designation/ Name	Proposed Designation/Name	Appropriate Zoning Districts
Agricultural	Rural/Agricultural	A-1, AR-6, RC
Rural Village	Rural Village	A-1, AR-6, B-O, B-1, B-2
-----	Suburban Transitional Residential* (Up to 1.5 units/acre)	RS
Suburban General	Suburban Neighborhood Residential (1.5 – 3 units/acre)	RS
Suburban High	Suburban High Residential (3 – 7 units/acre)	RS, RM
Multi-Family	Multi-Family Residential (8 – 15 units/acre)	RM, MX
Multi-Use	Suburban Center	RS, RM, MX, OS, BP, B-1, B-2, B-3, M-1
Commercial	Highway Commercial*	B-O, B-1, B-2, B-3, BP, MX
	Neighborhood Commercial*	B-1
	Rural Crossroads*	A-1, B-O, B-1
Business-Industrial	Business Flexible	B-O, B-1, B-2, B-3, OS, BP, M-1, M-2
Planned Business	Employment Center	B-1, B-2, OS, BP, M-1, MX
Destination Commerce	Destination Commerce	B-1, B-2, B-3
Limited Industrial	Limited Industrial	OS, BP, M-1
Industrial	Industrial	M-1, M-2, M-3
Flood Plain	Natural Conservation	Any Zoning District
-----	Parks and Conserved Lands*	Any Zoning District
<p>*New Designations Note: In certain instances, the Suburban Center, Highway Commercial, and Employment Center land use designations may have a residential component. Descriptions of those land use designations include recommendations regarding the percentage of a project that may be dedicated for residential uses, along with a phasing plan.</p>		

History + Culture

- There is newly-recommended design guidance for all historic districts, with more detailed and specific guidance applicable to National Historic Register Districts (Brown Grove Rural Historic District, Hanover County Courthouse, and Montpelier).
- There are new recommendations regarding design techniques and approaches for preserving historic structures, archaeological sites, historic cemeteries, and battlefield features located on sites proposed for development.

Economic Development

- The locations and descriptions for some Economic Development Zones (EDZs) have been updated and revised, and the EDZs are categorized into different types based upon the existing level of business development and infrastructure within each area.
- The Hylas and Sliding Hill Road EDZs shown in the previous plan are recommended for removal, with new EDZs identified: Route 30 Corridor, I-95/Old Ridge Road/Hickory Hill, U.S. Route 1 Corridor, and Mechanicsville Village.

Rural + Agriculture

- There is a new chapter that focuses on rural character, with associated recommendations related to:
 - Local agricultural economy;
 - Land preservation;
 - Design and functionality of residential development outside of the Suburban Service Area (SSA); and
 - Design features that can be incorporated into residential development within the SSA that can help reflect the County’s rural character.

Housing

- There is a new chapter that focuses on housing, with associated recommendations related to:
 - Raising awareness of local housing challenges;
 - Encouraging the private sector to provide high-quality housing options at appropriate locations; and
 - Supporting continued investment within established residential neighborhoods.

Active Living (Pedestrian/Bicycle Mobility)

- There are revisions to the *Active Living* chapter (which focuses on pedestrian/bicycle mobility) to:
 - Provide additional guidance regarding the design of pedestrian/bicycle infrastructure within new commercial and residential development;
 - Add recommendations related to regional trail networks, such as the Fall Line Trail that will be constructed in the County; and
 - Identify pedestrian/bicycle capital investment focus areas, including a pedestrian/bicycle “spine” network within the SSA, where public investment in pedestrian/bicycle infrastructure should be prioritized.

Transportation

- Revising the functional classification for select roadways as shown on the Major Thoroughfare Plan, including the following changes:
 - Reclassifying Blanton Road between Ashland Road/Ashcake Road and W. Patrick Henry Road from minor collector to a major collector;
 - Reclassifying Winns Church Road from a minor collector to a major collector;
 - Reclassifying Goddins Hill Road and Mount Hermon Road (between Goddins Hill Road and Ashcake Road/Peaks Road) from a major collector to a minor arterial;

- Reclassifying Old Ridge Road between U.S. Route 1 and Hickory Hill Road from a minor collector to a major collector;
- Reclassifying Elletts Crossing Road from a local street to a minor collector; and
- Reclassifying Scotchtown Road from Coatesville Road to West Patrick Henry Road to a minor collector.
- Revising conceptual roads shown on the Major Thoroughfare Plan by:
 - Removing the following previously-proposed conceptual roads: Winns Church Road Extension (between Cauthorne Road and U.S. Route 33), Center Street Road Extension, U.S. 301/Courthouse Bypass, New Ashcake Road Extension (between Sliding Hill Road and Ashcake Road), Old Telegraph Road Connector, Cobbs Road/Lakeridge Parkway Connector, and proposed thoroughfares north of State Route 30 crossing Interstate 95, along with roadways that have previously been completed;
 - Adding Woodside Road Parallel Road as a proposed road (west of Woodside Lane);
 - Realigning the proposed Lakeridge Parkway Extension, moving it southward to terminate at the intersection of Cedar Lane/Winns Church Road; and
 - Realigning the proposed Bell Creek Road/Autumn Park Way/Shady Grove Road/Academy Road connector.
- Identifying *focus corridors*, which are roadway segments that, due to existing capacity constraints, potential future capacity constraints, connectivity, and/or access to Economic Development Zones (EDZs), should be prioritized for transportation funding.
- Revising the typical sections for different types of roadways, with the recommended right-of-way width generally increasing from the typical sections currently referenced.
- Revising strategies related to transportation infrastructure to include recommendations related to future studies, including a future study of a potential Interstate 95 interchange north of Ashland and alignment studies for proposed concept roads.

Environment and Resiliency

- Revising and updating the *Environment* chapter to reflect current policies and initiatives and to address state code requirements regarding the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act and coastal resource management guidance.
- Adding a subsection to the *Environment* chapter regarding resiliency with associated recommendations related to hazard mitigation, renewable energy (including recommendations regarding the siting of solar facilities), efficient resource management, and historic and culturally-sensitive communities.

Community Facilities

- Updating the *Community Facilities* chapter to reflect updated population growth forecasts; existing facilities constructed since adoption of the current plan; and recommendations made in the latest facilities studies and master planning documents, including the Water and Wastewater Utilities Master Plan. Proposed facilities shown on these maps include a possible relocation of a pump station from west of Interstate 95 north of Hickory Hill Road to east of Interstate 95 north of Hickory Hill

Road, along with a potential new middle school/high school complex in the Mechanicsville area along U.S. Route 360 and Pole Green Road east of Walnut Grove Road.

General Land Use Plan

The General Land Use Plan (included within the Map Book) shows where new development and different use types may be appropriate over the next 20 years. A recommended land use designation is applied to every part of the County. The land use designations are not intended to be site specific but show what types of uses and residential densities may be appropriate in a certain area. The General Land Use Plan is frequently referenced as staff, the Planning Commission, and the Board of Supervisors evaluate land use proposals (rezonings, conditional use permits, special exceptions, etc.).

Changes to the General Land Use Plan were identified based upon:

- Feedback from Land Use Visioning Workshops;
- Feedback from staff experts regarding infrastructure, capacity, and economic development;
- Lessons learned from zoning cases; and
- Maps indicating zoning, existing land uses, vacant parcels, and historic resources.

Where possible, the boundaries of the land use designations were modified to follow clearer boundaries, such as streams and roadways.

Initial recommendations regarding changes to the General Land Use Plan were introduced publicly in January 2023, with subsequent changes and revisions shared at public meetings in April/May 2023 and July 2023.

Proposed Significant Changes to the General Land Use Plan by District	
Ashland District	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • End of Egypt Road: Change from Limited Industrial and Industrial to Suburban Neighborhood Residential • Sliding Hill Road/Peaks Road/Ashcake Road (Southwest Corner): Change from Limited Industrial to Rural/Agricultural • South Side of Ashcake Road (Near Brown Grove Baptist Church): Change from Limited Industrial to Suburban Neighborhood Residential • Ashcake Road/Virginia Crane Drive (Southwest Corner): Change from Limited Industrial to Suburban Neighborhood Residential • New Ashcake Road/Sliding Hill Road (West Side Adjacent to Airport): Change from Commercial and Limited Industrial to Neighborhood Commercial • New Ashcake Road/Sliding Hill Road (East Side Adjacent to Airport): Change from Commercial and Limited Industrial to Neighborhood Commercial and Suburban Neighborhood Residential • Sliding Hill Road East of I-295 Interchange: Change from Business Industrial to Highway Commercial

<p>Beaverdam District</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State Route 54 at Burleigh Drive: Change from Planned Business to Suburban Transitional Residential • North Side of State Route 54 East of Providence Church Road (and along Providence Church Road): Change from Planned Business to Suburban Neighborhood Residential • South Side of State Route 54 at Eastern Limits of the Town of Ashland: Change from Planned Business and Commercial to Employment Center • West Side of Old Ridge Road between the South Anna River and Hickory Hill Road: Change from Planned Business to Suburban Transitional Residential • Mount Hope Church Road at Doswell Road: Change from Commercial to Rural/Agricultural • Old Ridge Road/Teman Road/Hewlett Road: Change from Commercial to Rural/Agricultural • East Side of Elmont Road from the Ashland Town Limits to Ashcake Road: Change from Suburban General to Suburban Transitional Residential • Ashcake Road/Ashland Road from Elmont Road to Cedar Lane: Change from Suburban General to Suburban Transitional Residential • Industrial Strip (Current General Land Use Plan) East of Beaverdam: Change from Industrial to Rural/Agricultural • U.S. Route 301/New Ashcake Road/Rural Point Road: Change from Multi-Use to Neighborhood Commercial
<p>Chickahominy District</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • East Side of Shady Grove Road (Cool Well to Lou Lane Area): Change from Multi-Family to Suburban High Residential • Meadowbridge Road/Shady Grove Road (Southeast Corner Adjacent to I-295): Change from Multi-Family to Neighborhood Commercial • Pleasant Grove Road Corridor: Change from Commercial to Suburban Neighborhood Residential • North Side of Meadowbridge Road (Spring Valley Road to Existing Industrial): Change from Suburban General to Neighborhood Commercial • Sliding Hill Road East of I-295 Interchange: Change from Business Industrial to Highway Commercial • Meadowbridge Road/Pleasant Grove Road Area (including Memorial Regional Hospital): Change from Commercial to Neighborhood Commercial

<p>Cold Harbor District</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • South Side of Cold Harbor Road between Chickahominy River and Market Road: Change from Business Industrial to Limited Industrial • West Side of Beulah Church Road (Cold Harbor Road to Sandy Valley Road): Change from Suburban General to Suburban Transitional Residential • Boatswain Lane Area: Change from Suburban General to Suburban Transitional Residential and Rural/Agricultural • Interstate 295/Creighton Road Interchange (Southeast Corner): Change from Multi-Use to Employment Center, Neighborhood Commercial, and Suburban Neighborhood Residential • Walnut Grove Road/Creighton Road/Creighton Parkway Intersection: Change from Suburban General to Neighborhood Commercial • Battlefield Park Elementary School Site: Change from Suburban Transitional to Neighborhood Commercial • South Side of Old Cold Harbor Road/Harbor Hill Drive (Bruce Estates): Change from Multi-Family to Suburban Neighborhood Residential • South Side of Cold Harbor Road between I-295 and Janet Lane: Change from Suburban General to Neighborhood Commercial • Near I-295/Creighton Road Interchange Adjacent to High Point Farms: Change from Multi-Family to Suburban Residential High
<p>Henry District</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Area East of Westhaven Lake/Branch of Beaverdam Creek: Change from Suburban High to Suburban Neighborhood Residential • I-295/Pole Green Road Interchange (Northeast Corner): Change from Planned Business, Multi-Use, and Commercial to Employment Center • West Side of Rural Point Road (Polegreen Church Area to Stag’s Leap Subdivision): Change from Suburban General to Suburban Transitional Residential • East Side of U.S. Route 301 from Totopotomoy Creek to Rural Point Road: Change from Multi-Use to Suburban Neighborhood Residential and Neighborhood Commercial • East Side of U.S. Route 301 at Mimosa Hill Lane: Change from Commercial to Suburban Neighborhood Residential

<p>Mechanicsville District</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liberty Trace Subdivision: Change from Suburban General to Suburban High Residential • Robin Way/Wren Way: Change from Multi-Family to Suburban Neighborhood Residential • Lee-Davis Road/Brandy Hill Drive Intersection (East Side): Change from Suburban High to Highway Commercial • Bell Creek Road between Brandy Branch and Cold Harbor Road: Change from Limited Industrial to Highway Commercial • Seven Springs Road Area: Change from Multi-Use to Suburban Neighborhood Residential • I-295/Pole Green Road Interchange (Southeast Corner): Change from Multi-Use to Employment Center • Elm Drive/Stonewall Parkway (Southeast Corner: Cold Harbor Meadows/Hunters Crossing Subdivisions): Change from Multi-Family to Suburban Neighborhood Residential • Southwest of Cold Harbor Road/Beaver Dam Creek Crossing (Mill Valley Subdivision): Change from Multi-Family to Suburban Neighborhood Residential • East Side of Shady Grove Road (Lou Lane Area to Branch of Beaverdam Creek): Change from Multi-Family to Suburban Neighborhood Residential
<p>South Anna District</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lakeridge Parkway (Winding Brook Townhomes): Change from Multi-Use to Suburban High Residential • Carters Heights Road Area (South of Lewistown Road to Lickinghole Creek): Change from Multi-Use to Suburban Neighborhood Residential • Elmont Area: Change from Commercial to Suburban Neighborhood Residential and Neighborhood Commercial • South Side of Lewistown Road at Shelia Lee Drive: Change from Business Industrial to Suburban Neighborhood Residential • Cobbs Road East of Creek: Change from Business Industrial and Mixed-Use to Suburban Neighborhood Residential • South Side of Cedar Lane East of Chickahominy Falls: Change from Planned Business to Suburban High Residential • Cedar Lane at Proposed East/West Road: Change from Commercial to Suburban Neighborhood Residential • Ashcake Road/Ashland Road from Elmont Road to Cedar Lane: Change from Suburban General and Suburban Transitional Residential • Cauthorne Road South: Change from Suburban High and Planned Business to Suburban Neighborhood Residential

- | | |
|--|---|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • South Side of Ashland Road from Hylas Area to Cauthorne Road: Change from Suburban High to Suburban Neighborhood Residential • East Side of Cauthorne Road South of Ashland Road + Dude Ranch Road/Gordons Lane Area: Change from Planned Business to Suburban Neighborhood Residential • East Side of U.S. Route 33 at Chickahominy River: Change from Planned Business to Highway Commercial • U.S. Route 33 at Winns Church Road Area: Change from Planned Business and Commercial to Neighborhood Commercial • South Side of Winns Church Road from Grassy Swamp Creek to near U.S. Route 33: Change from Planned Business to Suburban Neighborhood Residential • West Side of Greenwood Road (Forest Heights Lane to Ashland Road): Change from Planned Business to Suburban Neighborhood Residential • South Side of Ashland Road from Cedar Lane to Greenwood Road: Change from Suburban General to Suburban Transitional Residential • U.S. Route 33 East of Louisa County Line: Change from Business Industrial to Rural Crossroads • U.S. Route 33 Corridor within the Suburban Service Area: Change from Planned Business to Employment Center and Suburban Neighborhood Residential • East Side of U.S. Route 33 at Gladfelter Road: Change from Industrial to Employment Center • West Side of U.S. Route 33 at Gladfelter Road: Change from Planned Business to Neighborhood Commercial and Suburban Neighborhood Residential |
|--|---|

General Changes to the General Land Use Plan

Redesignating Commercial Nodes to Neighborhood Commercial (Multiple Districts)

The following nodes designated as Commercial in the current plan are proposed to be redesignated Neighborhood Commercial:

- Pouncey Tract Road/Ashland Road Intersection
- U.S. Route 33/Ashland Road Intersection
- U.S. Route 1/Old Ridge Road Intersection
- Woodside Lane/Providence Church Road Intersection
- Sliding Hill Road/King Braxton Court Intersection
- U.S. Route 301/Whipporwill Road Intersection
- U.S. Route 301/Patrick Henry Boulevard Intersection
- Cool Springs Road/Combs Drive Area
- Dickey Drive Area
- U.S. Route 301/Shady Grove Road Area
- Shady Grove Road/Academy Road Area
- Pole Green Road/Bell Creek Road Intersection
- Pole Green Road/Lee Davis Road Intersection
- Old Mechanicsville Area
- Walnut Grove Road/Lee Davis Road/Cold Harbor Road Intersection
- Cobbs Road/Elmont Road Intersection

Other Changes to the General Land Use Plan

- Areas currently designated Flood Plain are proposed to be redesignated Natural Conservation, with their boundaries better reflecting current floodplain designations.
- Areas meeting the following criteria are proposed to be designated Parks and Conserved Lands:
 - Properties owned by government entities for use primarily for recreational and/or conservation purposes, such as County-owned parks and areas owned by the National Park Service;
 - Properties owned by non-profit organizations, such as the American Battlefield Trust and Richmond Battlefields Association, that are used primarily for conservation purposes; and
 - Properties that have been placed in a conservation easement.

Planning Commission Review

On August 10, 2023, the Planning Commission held a public hearing regarding the Comprehensive Plan Update (Envision Hanover). During the public hearing, there were 16 speakers that shared their concerns and ideas on a variety of topics that relate to the Comprehensive Plan. Based upon feedback received during the public hearing and at previous events, the Planning Commission discussed potential changes to the following components of the draft plan:

1. Introductory Language
2. Notification of Comprehensive Plan Amendments
3. Thoroughfare Buffers
4. Transitions between Uses
5. Revision to the General Land Use Plan (Meadowbridge Road/Shady Grove Road)
6. Residential/Commercial Phasing within Mixed-Use Development
7. Remove Old Telegraph Road from the Description of the Pedestrian/Bicycle Capital Investment Focus Area: U.S. Route 1 Corridor (South of Ashland)
8. Solar Energy Facilities

After discussion, the Planning Commission forwarded the draft plan to the Board of Supervisors, **recommending approval** with changes related to issues #1 – 3 and #5 – 8 listed above.

The changes, which are described in greater detail below, are reflected in the draft plan. Additionally, the text has been reformatted and photos added to create a more attractive and user-friendly document.

- *Issue #1: Introductory Language*

The Planning Commission added language to the introduction clarifying/reinforcing that the Comprehensive Plan is an advisory document, with interpretation and implementation of its recommendations the responsibility of the Board of Supervisors (added to page 4).

- *Issue #2: Notification of Comprehensive Plan Amendments*

The Planning Commission added language recommending that notice be sent to a wider area (not only adjoining property owners) for public hearings related to Comprehensive Plan Amendments (added to page 10).

- *Issue #3: Thoroughfare Buffers*

During the planning process, there has been significant feedback that residents want to maintain the rural character of the County, which includes maintaining natural buffers along major thoroughfares. To reduce the visibility of new development, the draft plan includes recommendations regarding the provision of thoroughfare buffers (including the recommended width of buffers).

After holding the public hearing, the Planning Commission revised language regarding thoroughfare buffers. The revised language describes characteristics of how these buffers should be designed, with a recommended width of at least 50 feet for land use designations applied within the Suburban Service Area (SSA).

- *Issue #4: Transitions between Uses*

During the public engagement process and the review of recent zoning cases, residents have expressed interest in having better transitions between different use types. For each land use designation, there are recommendations on how new development can transition to lower-intensity and higher-intensity development (existing or planned) on adjacent properties.

There was discussion about removing specific buffer widths and building heights, and instead including a description of general design techniques that could be incorporated into new development as it abuts different use types. After holding the public hearing and further discussion, the Planning Commission recommended retaining language regarding transitions as presented in the draft plan.

- *Issue #5: Revision to the General Land Use Plan (Meadowbridge Road/Shady Grove Road)*

Based upon a staff recommendation, the Planning Commission revised the General Land Use Plan to apply the *Neighborhood Commercial* land use designation to the southeast corner of the Meadowbridge Road/Shady Grove intersection (adjacent to Interstate 295). A community meeting regarding a proposed rezoning in that area was held on July 27, 2023 (after the joint workshop between the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors). An applicant is proposing neighborhood-oriented commercial uses in an area shown as *Suburban High Residential*. Community members seemed to support uses that align with the *Neighborhood Commercial* land use designation.

- *Issue #6: Residential/Commercial Phasing within Mixed-Use Development*

In certain instances, the *Suburban Center*, *Highway Commercial*, and *Employment Center* land use designations may have a residential component. Descriptions of those land use designations include recommendations regarding the percentage of a project that may be dedicated for residential uses, along with a phasing plan.

At the meeting on August 10, 2023, the Planning Commission discussed providing additional guidance regarding the phasing of residential and commercial uses within mixed-use development, helping ensure that commercial uses are developed prior to (or concurrently with) residential uses. Revised language regarding phasing has been incorporated into the draft plan for the appropriate land use designations. This language is similar to James City County's *Multiple Use Districts and Mixed Use Construction Phasing Policy* (added to pages 37, 42, and 47).

- *Issue #7: Remove Old Telegraph Road from the Description of the Pedestrian/Bicycle Capital Investment Focus Area: U.S. Route 1 Corridor (South of Ashland)*

Chapter 7: Active Living identifies Pedestrian/Bicycle Capital Investment Focus Areas, which are areas where investments in pedestrian/bicycle infrastructure should be prioritized. During the public hearing, citizens commented on the description of one of these focus areas, the U.S. Route 1 Corridor (South of Ashland). Those citizens requested that references to Old Telegraph Road as an alternative to U.S. Route 1 for pedestrians and cyclists be removed. Based on direction from the Planning Commission, references to Old Telegraph Road have been removed (description of each focus area is on p. 92).

- *Issue #8: Solar Energy Facilities*

High-level guidance regarding solar energy facilities has been revised to align with the Solar Energy Policy adopted by the Board of Supervisors on August 23, 2023 (p. 152 – 154).

Outstanding Issue

- *Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) and Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act*

Since the draft plan was prepared for the Planning Commission, the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) provided feedback on the document and how it addresses requirements in the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act (CBPA). Based upon the feedback received, staff recommends the following additions to the plan text and the map book:

- Adding maps to the map book showing resource protection areas (CBPA), soil types (including septic suitability), steep slopes, and impaired waters (similar to what was included in previous comprehensive plans), along with references indicating where members of the public can access additional information regarding these features.
- Adding language to Chapter 11: Environment + Resiliency explaining the relationship between land use, growth management, and environmental impacts (including physical/environmental constraints that limit development).
- Adding language to Chapter 11: Environment + Resiliency explaining how stormwater management and water quality issues are addressed as part of redevelopment.
- Adding language to Chapter 11: Environment + Resiliency explaining how docks and piers are regulated.
- Adding language to Chapter 11: Environment + Resiliency describing existing and potential water pollution sources, such as hazardous waste generators and reported leaking underground storage tanks.

Next Steps

After holding the public hearing, the Board of Supervisors may:

- *Approve (as presented)*: Approve the draft Comprehensive Plan as presented.
- *Approve (with revisions)*: Approve the draft Comprehensive Plan with any specific revisions to the document.
- *Defer*: Defer discussion and any decision regarding the Comprehensive Plan to a future Board of Supervisors meeting.

Attachments

1. Draft Text (August 29, 2023)
2. Draft Map Book (August 29, 2023)