



History of Planning in Hanover County

March 2022

Hanover County began actively managing growth in the 1950s with adoption of its first Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Ordinance. The first Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 1972 and has been regularly updated (usually every five years). Since the 1970s, the Comprehensive Plan and other growth management policies have directed higher-intensity development to designated growth areas (now known as the Suburban Service Area), helping protect the rural character of much of the County.

October 1949	Planning Commission created by the Board of Supervisors.
September 1954	First Subdivision Ordinance adopted by the Board of Supervisors.
December 1958	Subdivision Ordinance updated by the Board of Supervisors.
April 1959	First Zoning Ordinance adopted by the Board of Supervisors.
January 1968	First planner hired by the Board of Supervisors.
May 1968	Board of Supervisors approves joining the Richmond Regional Planning District Commission.
June 1972	The first Comprehensive Plan was adopted by the Board of Supervisors, designating <i>Urban Service Areas</i> (now known as <i>Suburban Service Areas</i>) to accommodate higher-intensity residential, commercial, and industrial development (with phased expansion).
April 1974	Updated Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Ordinance adopted by the Board of Supervisors.
May 1977	Board of Supervisors directed preparation of Growth Management Plan that will be adopted and reviewed every five years.
September 1980	Board of Supervisors authorized hiring staff to create/support its Growth Management Program.
April 1981	General Policies Plan (Element of the Comprehensive Plan Update) adopted by the Board of Supervisors.
October 1982	1982 Comprehensive Plan adopted by the Board of Supervisors.
May 1988	1988 Comprehensive Plan adopted by the Board of Supervisors.

June 1993	Board of Supervisors accepted recommendations made by the <i>Route 1 Citizens Advisory Committee for Economic Revitalization of the Route 1 Corridor</i> to create an overlay district for the Route 1 Corridor, initiating an ordinance amendment.
January 1994	1994 Comprehensive Plan adopted by the Board of Supervisors.
August 1994	Hanover County received Certified Local Government (CLG) designation, recognizing its commitment to historic preservation through adopted plans and policies.
October 1996	Maximum residential densities within the A-1 (Agricultural) zoning district were reduced from one unit per 6.25 acres to one unit per 10 acres. The AR-6 (Agricultural Residential) zoning district was created.
May 1997	Rural Conservation (RC) zoning district created.
September 1998	1997/1998 Comprehensive Plan adopted by the Board of Supervisors.
December 1998	Elmont Community Small Area Plan adopted by the Board of Supervisors (as a comprehensive plan amendment).
February 2000	Multiple single-family residential zoning districts were repealed and replaced with one variable-density residential district (RS – Single-Family Residential) for use throughout the Suburban Service Area.
June 2003	2002/2003 Comprehensive Plan adopted by Board of Supervisors.
August 2004	County recognized as a <i>Preserve America</i> community by the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation.
September 2006	Mechanicsville Small Area Plan adopted by the Board of Supervisors (as a comprehensive plan amendment).
March 2007	2007 Comprehensive Plan adopted by the Board of Supervisors.
2009	County recognized by the National Association of Counties (NACO) as Achievement Award Winner for its Community Development Customer Service Initiative.
January 2013	Major updates to Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Ordinance adopted by the Board of Supervisors.
September 2013	2012 Comprehensive Plan adopted by the Board of Supervisors.
2016	County recognized by the National Association of Counties (NACO) as Achievement Award Winner for its Strategic Zoning Initiative.
February 2018	2017/2018 Comprehensive Plan adopted by Board of Supervisors.