



**Community Participation Team  
Agenda**

**Mechanicsville Branch Library (Meeting Room A/B)  
7461 Sherwood Crossing Place  
Mechanicsville, VA 23111**

**Wednesday, June 8, 2022  
6:00 p.m.**

- I. Call to Order**
- II. Adoption of Agenda**
- III. Team Organization**
  - a. Review/Endorsement of the Charter + Engagement Guidelines**
  - b. Discussion: Team Facilitator/Leadership (Chair + Vice Chair)**
- IV. Introductory Presentation + Discussion**
  - a. Introduction to the Team + Planning Process**
  - b. Roles + Responsibilities**
  - c. Summary of Public Involvement**
  - d. Moving Forward**
  - e. Discussion**
- V. Vision Statement: Review + Discussion**
- VI. Defining Rural: Review + Discussion**
- VII. Adjournment (Next Meeting Date: To Be Determined)**



## **OVERALL PURPOSE**

The Community Participation Team:

- Encourages residents, business owners, and other stakeholders to participate in the Comprehensive Plan update process; and
- Provides feedback on recommended strategies and planning concepts prepared by staff, the consultant, and/or the Planning Commission.

The Community Participation Team is an advisory group that supports the Planning Commission as it prepares a draft plan for consideration by the Board of Supervisors. While the Planning Commission has official review responsibilities and the Board of Supervisors maintains decision-making authority on the Comprehensive Plan, input from the Community Participation Team will help ensure that a range of perspectives are received during engagement efforts and factored into the plan's vision and implementation priorities.

## **COMPOSITION**

The Community Participation Team consists of:

- Planning Commission (7 members); and
- Seven (7) residents of Hanover County representing each magisterial district and appointed by the Board of Supervisors.

Residents appointed to serve on the Community Participation Team should represent different stakeholder groups and interests that align with the focus areas addressed in the Comprehensive Plan (e.g. Land Use, Transportation, Economic Development, Housing, Active Living, Environment, Resiliency, etc.).

## **TERM**

Members will serve on the Community Participation Team from appointment until the updated plan is adopted (Anticipated Adoption Date: August 2023).

If a member resigns or is otherwise unable to serve, the Board of Supervisors may appoint a new member to fill any vacancy.

## **MEETING FREQUENCY**

The Community Participation Team will meet at the beginning and end of each phase of community participation (see the Public Engagement Plan for a description of each of the four phases of community engagement). The Community Participation Team will meet at least eight (8) times during the planning process. Additional meetings may be called by the chair of the Planning Commission or Planning Director as needed to discuss a particular issue or planning concept. All meetings are open to the public and minutes of each meeting will be maintained by the Planning Department.

## **SPECIFIC DUTIES**

The Community Participation Team will:

- Assist staff and the consultant to identify issues of concern to residents.
- Assist the staff and the consultant with the development of the plan's overall vision statement.
- Participate in and observe public meetings (and facilitate small citizen group discussions where applicable).
- Actively encourage residents and stakeholders to participate and engage in the planning process.
- Share social media posts, distribute flyers, and communicate information with different community groups.
- Review feedback provided at engagement events/activities.
- Serve as a "sounding board" for ideas regarding recommended goals and implementation strategies.

## **TEAM ENGAGEMENT GUIDELINES**

As an advisory group, the Community Participation Team will provide feedback to the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors regarding different issues related to the Envision Hanover planning process. There will not be formal votes, but decisions will be made by consensus. All team members will have an opportunity to share their ideas and viewpoints in a respectful manner and will work collaboratively to reach an agreement. If a consensus is not reached in a timely manner, the meeting minutes will reflect the areas of agreement and areas of disagreement.

To help facilitate discussion, the Community Participation Team will elect a Chair and Vice Chair. The Chair and Vice Chair will serve until the updated plan is adopted (unless they resign).

Endorsed by the Community Participation Team on \_\_\_\_\_ .



## BACKGROUND

As part of Phase #1 public engagement (January 1, 2022 – March 4, 2022), the project team solicited feedback from members of the public to help identify common themes that should be reflected in the vision and goals of the updated Comprehensive Plan. A series of events were held to receive feedback from stakeholders and provide information about the planning process, with 172 participants attending in-person open houses. Additionally, 392 participants completed an online survey. In all, over 4,000 comments were received.

Some key themes emerged:

- ***Preserve Rural Character***

Many respondents think that the rural character found in much of Hanover County should be maintained. Loss of farmland, forests, and open space was identified as the most critical issue Hanover County is currently facing, and the second-biggest concern looking into the future.

- ***Manage Growth***

Many respondents think that growth should be managed and directed to areas with adequate infrastructure, limiting new development within rural areas. A few comments mentioned improving the quality/aesthetics of new development, and a few others expressed interest in reinvesting in established neighborhoods and commercial areas to improve the aesthetics (and desirability) of existing communities.

- ***Maintain Good Schools***

Many comments cited high-quality schools as a community strength and thought it was important to maintain (or improve) the quality of schools during the planning horizon. Some respondents felt that the school buildings should be improved/renovated, while others commented on the quality of the curriculum.

- ***Improve the Transportation Network (including Active Transportation)***

Many respondents commented on the need to improve the local roadway network, and increased traffic/congestion was identified as one of the biggest concerns looking into the future. Some wanted improved roadway design (such as wider shoulders on rural roadways) and/or maintenance, while others thought certain roadways should be improved to address localized issues with congestion. There is also a desire to provide safe, comfortable, and convenient opportunities for walking and biking. Among respondents, there seems to be relatively limited interest in providing transit service.

- ***Provide More Parks and Recreational Opportunities***

Many respondents felt that there should be more amenitized parks and recreational opportunities for people of all ages, especially within suburban areas.

The intent of the vision statement is to address some of these common themes and describe a common vision for the future.

The current Comprehensive Plan does not have an overarching vision statement.

## **WHAT IS A VISION STATEMENT?**

A vision is the comprehensive, overarching statement of the desired future of the County. The vision is the ultimate set of ideals to which the County should aspire.

All of the goals, objectives, and implementation strategies listed in the Comprehensive Plan should support and help realize the vision.

## **DRAFT VISION STATEMENT**

In the year 2045, Hanover County has fulfilled the vision that was laid out for it a quarter century ago. As we look at the County in 2045, here is what we will see:

**Preservation:** Hanover County has preserved its rural landscapes, natural areas, and cultural resources while accommodating quality low-density residential development. The rural area of the County is characterized by a thriving agricultural economy and opportunities for small community-based businesses to prosper.

**Growth:** Growth has been directed to designated areas where public services can be provided in an efficient and fiscally-responsible manner. Safe and attractive suburban neighborhoods and business centers are flourishing and are served by sidewalks, bikeways, and a well-designed roadway network connecting them to nearby amenities.

**Quality of Life:** Residents of all backgrounds, no matter where they live in the County, have access to quality employment and housing opportunities that meet their household needs. Hanover County continues to serve its residents with outstanding public safety, public schools, parks, libraries, and other facilities and services.



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As part of this outreach, citizens were asked to help define *rural*, since there is not a definition of *rural* in the current Comprehensive Plan. Below is a table showing how those participating in the in-person open houses on online survey responded to the prompt “What does rural mean to you?”

Comment Topic	Open Houses	Online Survey	Total
Agriculture/Farming/Forestry	78	195	273
Large-Lot Residential Development	58	156	214
Open Space	50	147	197
Sense of Community	29	25	54
Rural Roads/Low Traffic	17	33	50
Natural Resources/Outdoor Recreation	20	27	47
Minimal Services + Infrastructure	15	29	44
Quiet	7	32	39
Small Towns/Villages with Small-Scale Businesses	2	25	27
Dark Night Skies	7	7	14

## DRAFT: DEFINING RURAL

Based upon the public feedback received, a draft definition of *rural* was prepared:

Rural areas in the County are areas separated from suburban growth with significant open space, scenic views of fields, farmland, and forests and limited development. In historic villages and crossroads communities, there may be small-scale, mixed-use development that is consistent with the traditional architecture of the community. Outside of historic crossroads and villages, any new development occurs at very low densities, with significant setbacks and visual buffers from roadways and nearby structures. Other than sounds produced from farming operations and wildlife, rural areas are quiet and skies are dark at night, creating a peaceful environment. Although peaceful, rural areas have a strong sense of community and a vibrant agricultural-based economy.