

A G E N D A

JAMES CITY COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

WORK SESSION

County Government Center Board Room

April 23, 2002

5:00 P.M.

-
- A. CALL TO ORDER**
 - B. ROLL CALL**
 - C. BOARD DISCUSSION**
 - 1. 2002 Comprehensive Plan Update Methodology
 - 2. Greenway Master Plan Briefing
 - D. ADJOURNMENT**

MEMORANDUM

DATE: April 23, 2002
TO: The Board of Supervisors
FROM: Donald E. Davis, Principal Planner
SUBJECT: 2002 Comprehensive Plan Update Methodology

As requested at the March 26, 2002, Board of Supervisors' Work Session, staff collected information on the methodologies other jurisdictions in Virginia employed to update their Comprehensive Plans. In addition, staff called several consultants to explore how they might be utilized to increase public participation. This information is detailed below.

Other Jurisdictions

To obtain a wide perspective on the types of Comprehensive Plan methodologies that have been used, staff contacted the following localities:

- ! City of Chesapeake
- ! City of Hampton
- ! Loudoun County
- ! City of Suffolk
- ! City of Newport News
- ! City of Williamsburg
- ! York County

In conversations with these jurisdictions, focus was placed on how consultants were utilized in creating their plans. Specifically, surrounding localities were polled to determine if and how consultants were used to increase citizen participation. A full summary of these discussions is attached.

Consultants for Public Participation

Staff also called consultants directly to understand what services they might offer to increase public participation, and at what cost. One consultant described a public participation process on the Southside in which the company had planned six to eight meetings, facilitated the meetings, organized the media campaign, and held an open house for a cost of \$35,000.

Consultants for Demographics Analysis

In addition, staff recommends the use of consultant services to assist in the full and accurate use of demographic data from the 2000 Census, Virginia Employment Commission, and local data sources. The estimated cost is \$5,000.

RECOMMENDATION:

At its April 1, 2002, meeting, the Planning Commission discussed the proposed methodology and recommended utilizing a combination of staff and consultants to update the Comprehensive Plan (Option B – Staff and Consultant as presented in the March 26, 2002 memorandum).

Staff's recommendations are summarized as follows:

1. Staff concurs with the Planning Commission's recommendation for Option B. Should the Board of Supervisors concur, the required \$127,000 for Option B should be included in the County's upcoming fiscal year budget.
2. Should the Board of Supervisors wish to utilize a consultant for the full public participation effort, an additional \$45,000 (\$35,000 for the consultant, \$10,000 for extra advertising) will be required and should also be set aside in the budget. Staff believes it can do a good job of public participation without this expenditure and therefore, does not advocate special financial appropriations for this effort. If the Board of Supervisors chooses to utilize staff rather than a consultant for the public participation process, then the \$10,000 for advertising will still be necessary and should be set aside.
3. Upon deciding issues No. 1 and No. 2 above, the Board of Supervisors should then refer the update of the Comprehensive Plan back to the Planning Commission so the update can begin in June as depicted on the attached time line.

Donald E. Davis

CONCUR:

O. Marvin Sowers, Jr.

DED/gs
compreplan02.mem

Attachments:

1. Use of Consultants in the Public Participation Process
- 2.. Comprehensive Plan Updated Time line

SURVEY OF JURISDICTIONS

City of Chesapeake

The City of Chesapeake is currently beginning the process of updating its Comprehensive Plan. According to Jaleh Pett, Project Manager, the Chesapeake process will involve extensive collaboration with consultants. Titan Systems Corporation is the primary consultant who will handle analyzing data provided by the planning staff and creating the new Comprehensive Plan including the transportation master plan and land use elements. Chesapeake has successfully worked with Titan Systems before, which is a primary reason why they were chosen for this project. Total cost is budgeted at \$250,000 for the Comprehensive Plan and an additional \$150,000 for the transportation master plan.

The public participation portion of the plan, however, will be entirely run by the Chesapeake planning staff. This includes a series of public meetings throughout the City that will be conducted over the next few months. In order to maximize citizen participation in the plan, information on the Comprehensive Plan, including a questionnaire, will be mailed to every household.

City of Hampton

The City of Hampton's update to its 1989 Comprehensive Plan has proceeded slowly due to staff turnover and to the City's focus on creating and implementing a strategic management plan. According to staff, the current focus of the Comprehensive Plan update will be to merge the Strategic Plan and the Comprehensive Plan.

In preparation for the update, consultants were utilized to conduct a two-day "future search" where key members of the community came together and developed six core values intended to guide the Comprehensive Plan update. The approximate cost was \$10,000. The results of this effort have been placed on hold due to staff turnover. As with past efforts, planning staff is undertaking nearly 100 percent of the work effort, although if funding were to become available, they would consider hiring a consultant to assist in the highly technical areas such as the transportation section.

Loudoun County

Loudoun County adopted its new Comprehensive Plan on July 23, 2001, after more than two years of preparation and public input. For the Comprehensive Plan review, a series of public forums and focus groups were held throughout the County. The 2000 Comprehensive Plan Review is an update of some sections while other sections are essentially being rewritten due to the County's tremendous growth over the last ten years. Loudoun County identified eleven categories, including the controversial land use policies for rural, suburban, and transition areas, for revision.

Workload on the Comprehensive Plan was split between consultants and staff. The eight consulting firms hired for the plan revision focused on specific areas. The most expensive by far was the transportation modeling performed by MCV Associates and Kellerco, which cost approximately \$105,000.

Four consultants, Milton Herd Planning and Design, Kellerco, Robert Charles Lesser and Company, and Land Design Inc., conducted general plan charettes that allowed for additional public participation in creating the new plan. Total cost for general plan charettes was approximately \$5,400.

The three other consultants provided public meeting transcripts (Oak Grove Reporting), environmental and town policy (Northern Virginia Regional Commission) and rural land policy (Strategic Land Planning Inc.). Total consultant costs including transportation modeling and charettes were \$129,638.

City of Newport News

The City of Newport News adopted an update of its Comprehensive Plan, *Framework for the Future*, on June 26, 2001. As with the first plan, the update is largely staff driven, with the majority of the citizen input coming from four task forces (representing the four planning districts) and one youth task force that directed the Comprehensive Plan sections. These citizen input committees had 25 members, although active membership over the three-year revision process was closer to 10 to 15 citizens. In addition, the City utilized an oversight committee with Planning Commission, planning staff, and citizen-at-large representation to tie the various pieces together. Prior to the update process, a citizen survey was conducted by the Wessex Group Ltd. to identify priority issues. The cost was \$25,000.

City of Suffolk

The City of Suffolk completed its review and update of its Comprehensive Plan more than a year ago utilizing consultants for nearly the entire project. L.D.R. International Consultants from Columbia, Maryland was the primary consulting firm utilized who in turn hired other consultants for specific sections of the plan such as transportation. Planning staff credits the success of their Comprehensive Planning process to both the broad breadth of knowledge that the consultants brought to the project and the close interaction between the consultants and staff. Elected officials and staff guided the consultants throughout the process and set clear goals such as rewriting key sections on growth control and public facility usage. Staff recommended using primarily consultants to update their next plan. The original contract was for \$175,000, and an additional land use study cost approximately \$138,000. Total consulting costs were \$313,000.

In addition to public hearings on the Comprehensive Plan review, a series of citizen input meetings were held where residents helped to identify and prioritize issues. Consultants and staff worked as a team to facilitate these meetings. In general, consultants ran the larger meeting while staff ran the smaller ones. Bob Goumas, Planner, suggested that the use of consultants in this process was very successful for ensuring successful and productive public meetings.

City of Williamsburg

The City of Williamsburg has used consultants to update the majority of its last five Comprehensive Plans. The Cox Company was hired to update the majority of the 1989 Comprehensive Plan as well as the most recent update approved by the City Council on July 9, 1998. Consultant fees for this update exceeded \$125,000.

Upon review of the plan in ten years, the City of Williamsburg will be almost completely developed with a new focus on redevelopment and upgrades of buildings. For these reasons, the Planning Director is considering not using consultants to update the majority of the next Comprehensive Plan. Instead, he is considering hiring a planner on a temporary contract whose primary responsibility would be to guide the Comprehensive Plan.

Besides multiple public hearings before the Planning Commission and the City Council on the final plan, three themed public meetings, focusing on a particular area of the City, were held by Williamsburg. Both staff and the consultants jointly ran the meetings. Specifically, staff was responsible for organizing the meeting and notifying property owners and the general public, while the consultant opened each meeting with a general presentation on the area being discussed.

York County

The York County Comprehensive Plan, *Charting the Course Toward 2015*, was adopted on October 6, 1999. This update of the 1991 plan was started in 1996 with the formation of a 16-member Comprehensive Plan Review Committee. This committee's focus was collecting citizen comments regarding the goals and objectives of the Comprehensive Plan, and based on these comments, recommending changes to the plan. The actual update of the plan was completed entirely by the planning staff.

The public input process included a citizen survey, a questionnaire published in the *Citizen News*, two structured and two unstructured town meetings. In addition, a 24-hour Comprehensive Plan comment telephone line was created where citizens could record messages. According to Tim Cross of the York County Planning Department, a consultant was utilized to train the Review Committee in nominal group techniques. The approximate cost for this consultant was \$1,500.

MEMORANDUM

DATE: April 23, 2002
TO: The Board of Supervisors
FROM: Needham S. Cheely, III, Director, Division of Parks and Recreation
SUBJECT: Draft Greenway Master Plan

For the past 14 months, a Board appointed Steering Committee, with staff from the Division of Parks and Recreation and the Planning Department, have prepared a 100 percent draft Greenway Master Plan. The Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission oversaw the drafting process and received the formal master plan from the Steering Committee. This document is available on the County's website and in hard copy at various locations around the County. A Greenway information hotline (259-3241) has been available during the planning process to provide information to citizens and gather questions and comments important to citizens. Four public meetings last fall afforded citizens a platform to discuss greenway planning issues and also to develop goals and objectives for the plan.

On March 5, 2002, the Greenway Steering Committee endorsed the draft Greenway Master Plan, including the Action Plan that recommends an annual funding mechanism of one-cent of the real estate tax rate be designated for greenway and trail capital improvement projects. This plan was forwarded to the Park and Recreation Advisory Commission for their review and endorsement.

A Public Hearing has been scheduled for April 17, 2002, 6:30 p .m., during the Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission's regular meeting, to gather public comment and discuss the plan. The Advisory Commission's recommendation will be forwarded to the Board.

The draft Greenway Master Plan has been forwarded to the Planning Commission in the form of a Reading File. The Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission is meeting with the Planning Commission on May 6, 2002, as part of their regular meeting to receive their questions and comments.

The format of the document includes two handout sections in the front. The Executive Summary and the FYI education handout were designed to function as two stand-alone documents giving readers quick access to information highlighting the plan. The table of contents also gives readers a quick education about planning issues and greenway planning elements.

The plan is scheduled to go before the Board of Supervisors on May 28.

Needham S. Cheely, III

NSC/gs
greenway.mem

Attachment

cc: Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission
Greenway Steering Committee

Executive Summary

In a broader sense, the word *greenway* is a generic term for a wide variety of linear open spaces”¹ applied synonymously to similar land uses, such as greenbelts, parkways, green space, trails, and linear parks. While the terminology is only 30 years young, the principles found within greenway planning are centuries old. This Greenway Master Plan endeavors to establish a framework for a County-wide system of interconnected greenways and trails for the benefit of our citizens and the enhancing of our community quality of life.

During the past 12 months, a Board appointed Greenway Steering Committee has worked with the Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission, County staff, and key stakeholders to create the first ever “Greenway Master Plan for James City County.” This process focused on key issues that are shaping development policies and urban design not only in James City County, but also across the nation. This Greenway Master Plan lays the foundation for this new program, with future plan revisions to focus on corridor details and implementation strategies.

Defining Greenways

James City County has defined greenways as linear open spaces that are managed for conservation, recreation, and/or alternative transportation uses.² Greenways often follow natural features such as ridgelines, stream valleys, and rivers; and cultural features such as canals, utility corridors, abandoned rail lines, zoning buffers, roadways, and wherever there is a break in the land pattern. Although each greenway is unique, most greenways are networks of natural open space corridors that connect neighborhoods, parks, and schools to areas of natural, cultural, recreational, scenic, and historic significance. These passageways link people and places to nature for the enjoyment and enhancement of the community.

This plan will become a component of a broader Open Space Master Plan, which is seen as an important planning tool of the James City County Comprehensive Plan. (*Refer to the Open Space graphic, Appendix 13.1.*) The Division of Parks and Recreation will manage the Greenway Master Plan whose main goal is to balance environmental protection with the need for recreational amenities. This new comprehensive and integrated plan will result in open space preservation, environmental protection, species habitat protection, land conservation, historic preservation, healthier lifestyles, passive recreation, heritage tourism and ecotourism initiatives, and a more livable and sustainable community. The nexus of these greenway benefits helps us move closer toward a shared vision of *community* in the truest sense of the word.

Citizen Input

The success of this planning effort hinged upon strong community involvement and grass-roots support. During the planning process, educational information was made available to the public through various means as outlined in the Communication and Education Plan, including the FYI educational insert in July 2001. Citizen information was gathered during public meetings, focus group sessions, public presentations, and Internet surveys from a broad cross-section of the community. This supporting data provided information essential to formulating goals and strategies for the plan.

The benefits associated with greenways are overwhelmingly positive. Communities investing substantial resources to this effort enjoy widespread citizen support and the realization of healthier lifestyles, a more diverse economy, a beautiful environment, and a more enjoyable quality of life.

Six goal areas were developed based upon benefits associated with greenways. These goal areas were refined with Steering Committee input to produce outcomes and strategies during the focus group sessions.

¹ Greenways, Charles Flink and Robert Searns, in partnership with the Conservation Fund, 1993, preface.

² Definition from the Virginia Outdoors Plan, 1996.

1. Economic Development Goal

Address both the appropriate costs of implementing the greenway system (including land acquisition and capital improvements) and the multi-objective benefits resulting from its creation that will have a positive economic impact on the community.

2. Recreation/Health and Wellness/Safety Goal

Design the greenway system as a recreational resource with public access connections to other recreational resources, offering a full spectrum of recreation and exercise opportunities that are safe for all users.

3. Transportation Goal

Provide corridors that bicyclists, pedestrians, and others can use to get from one place to another, free from motor vehicle conflicts, as an alternative to motor vehicle use.

4. Environmental Goal

Design a plan that preserves, promotes, and enhances awareness of the County's environmental assets, including developing a comprehensive greenway system that is sensitive to environmental, historical, cultural, scenic, and open space resources.

5. Education Goal

Educate the public about the need for and benefits of greenways and educate the greenway system user about the area's natural and cultural history.

6. Quality of Life Goal

Design a greenway system that maximizes accessibility for greenway system users, nearby property owners, and neighborhoods to achieve a walkable, livable, and sustainable community.

Citizens consistently rated Quality of Life as the most important greenway goal. The Environmental Goal ranked second among goals, reflecting a strong concern for environmental protection, open space protection, and historic preservation. The relationships between open space, recreation, and leisure were shown to be significant factors in community planning and quality of life, both as an amenity and as an economic benefit to attract more businesses to the area. Citizen requests for more trail facilities were consistent throughout the planning process.

Greenway Corridor Planning

While most greenways are green and natural, greenways do change within a variety of changing cultural contexts. The overriding principle as a linear open space remains unchanged, however, the amount of green depends on the local context. Five main types of greenways include vehicular, cultural, recreational, aquatic, and environmental.

1. Vehicular Greenways recognize the importance of improving the driving experience through enhanced roadway aesthetics, such as scenic viewsheds, gateways, billboard restrictions, sign ordinances, wildflower meadows, tree canopies over the road, landscaped medians, etc. This plan makes specific recommendations to create scenic buffers and multiuse pedestrian and bicycle trails parallel to existing roadway corridors.

2. Cultural Greenways provide opportunities to elevate the green quality of streetscapes as they weave through suburban, urban and commercial areas. Given the heavy reliance of the County's economic base upon tourism, this plan recommends implementing Main Street USA design guidelines as a way to enhance the attractiveness of our roadways to visitors and the greater community.
3. Recreational Greenways respond to citizen requests for more walking and biking trails. Recreational enjoyment by citizens remains one of the single greatest factors in promoting greenways and trails. "Walking continues to be the number one recreational activity in America,"³ and in James City County, the 2001 Comprehensive Plan survey revealed 86 percent of citizens want more walking and biking trails. Fully 65 percent of Americans walk for recreation, health or leisure, 31 percent bicycle, 24 percent visit natural areas, 20 percent jog, and 15 percent hike/backpack.⁴ Based on the Virginia Outdoors Plan standards, the Division of Parks and Recreation has identified a shortage of 100-miles of walking trails for our County. The timing and location for future trail development over the next ten years is outlined in the Action Plan. These trails should be integrated with the sidewalk and bicycle plans to partner resources when these systems overlap.
4. Aquatic Greenways, also known as blueways, combine the benefits of recreational and environmental greenways. Our three primary blueway corridors are the James, York, and Chickahominy Rivers, in addition to numerous streams and tributaries.
5. Environmental Greenways represent stream, river, and wetland corridors that are protected under the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act, as well as other natural and contiguous open spaces. The plan recommends giving special attention to those sensitive areas because of their environmental significance. Two goals of environmental greenways are to preserve open spaces and provide access to natural areas that permit trail construction without damaging the natural environment. In many instances, trails are recommended as part of the multi-objective open space protection/acquisition strategy. Ten of the larger protected waterways include: Powhatan, College, Gordon, Yarmouth, Diascund, Ware, Taskinas, Mill, Skiffes and Wood Creeks.

Developing the Greenway Map

The key word describing greenways is connections. Creating a comprehensive list of places that people want to visit required generating several maps, each with a unique way of inventorying sites, facilities, and interpreting data. An inventory of all parks and schools served as the base map to construct three specific maps: the easement map, land use map, and the park and facility inventory map. The Steering Committee recommended this plan include data from neighboring jurisdictions to adequately address connectivity between all facilities within the Historic Triangle of Jamestown, Yorktown and Colonial Williamsburg. The end product was a map with an inventory of significant sites, parks and open spaces, pedestrian and bikeway trail corridors, technical information, and the action plan.

Other Greenway Master Plan elements detailed trail planning and design issues to include:

Greenway Planning and Design

The plan includes a detailed description of design standards to be applied in the planning, design, construction, or improvement of greenways and trails.

³ National Recreation and Parks Society.

⁴ Virginia Outdoors Plan, p.90, 1996.

Maintenance and Management

Three types of trail maintenance programs are identified, as well as issues related to safety and security for users and nearby residents. Operational plans for the maintenance and management of new trail facilities are recommended as an integral part of any new trail design. The plan also takes into account the ownership and liability issue. The risk assumed is born entirely by the user, with reference made to Virginia Code – 29.1-509.

Implementation Strategies and Funding Mechanisms

This section includes a comprehensive description of five methods used to acquire land for greenways: fee-simple purchases, multi-objective properties, donations, easements, and regulatory means. Funding mechanisms include local, State, and Federal funding programs, grants from private foundations and corporations, small-scale donation programs, and volunteer assistance programs.

Appendix

Much of the technical data supporting this document can be found in the appendix, such as the multi-objective benefits associated with greenways, which are tied directly to the six goal areas. Additional funding mechanisms that may become available in the future are detailed as well. A separate section compiles national survey data over a ten-year period to dispel many fears citizens may have concerning how trails affect crime, safety, and property values.

Action Plan

The Greenway Master Plan is guided by the development of a ten-year Action Plan, to be revised concurrently with the Parks and Recreation Master Plan. The Action Plan prioritizes trail development projects based on community input during this process and the Parks and Recreation Comprehensive Master Plan. Each proposal will detail corridor recommendations, land acquisition or easement strategies, capital expenditures, potential funding sources, and timelines for completion.

The Greenway Steering Committee endorsed the Action Plan, which recommends an annual funding mechanism of one-cent of the real estate tax rate be designated for greenway and trail capital improvement projects.

*“To make a greenway is to make a community.”
–Charles Little, author of Greenways for America.*

greenway.mem