

I. Introduction and Authority

Purpose and Nature of the Plan

This Comprehensive Plan for the Town of Christiansburg is the result of continuing efforts by Town leaders and citizens to direct positive, orderly growth in the Town and surrounding urbanizing areas of Montgomery County. The Comprehensive Plan is the principal tool to guide growth and development in a community. It accomplishes this by examining current conditions and providing direction that will enhance the Town's functions, appearance, and livability.

Christiansburg's small town charm and abundance of scenic mountain vistas belie its role as the New River Valley's commercial center. The Town's evolution from a quiet mountain community to an economic center has been rapid and not without complications. As the number of businesses attracted to the Town's well-located industrial parks and commercial centers increase, so does the demand for public services and community facilities to serve new residents. This plan seeks to preserve and enhance those aspects of Christiansburg that make it appealing for families and economic enterprises. It also provides a solid framework to guide Town policy that will shape Christiansburg's future.

The authority for preparation of the Comprehensive Plan originates with Title 15.2-2223 of the Code of Virginia:

“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.

In the preparation of a comprehensive plan the commission shall make careful and comprehensive surveys and studies of the existing conditions and trends of growth, and of the probable future requirements of its territory and inhabitants. The comprehensive plan shall be made with the purpose of guiding and accomplishing 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.

The comprehensive plan shall be general in nature, in that it shall designate the general or approximate location, character, and extent of each feature shown on the plan 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.

The plan, with the accompanying maps, plats, charts, and descriptive matter, shall show the locality's long-range recommendations for the general development of the territory covered by the plan. It may include, but need not be limited to:

1. The designation of areas for various types of public and private development and use, such as different kinds of residential, business, industrial, agricultural, mineral resources, conservation, recreation, public service, flood plain and drainage, and other areas;
2. The designation of a system of transportation facilities such as streets, roads, highways, parkways, railways, bridges, viaducts, waterways, airports, ports, terminals, and other like facilities;
3. The designation of a system of community service facilities such as parks, forests, schools, playgrounds, public buildings and institutions, hospitals, community centers, waterworks, sewage disposal or waste disposal areas, and the like;
4. The designation of historical areas and areas for urban renewal or other treatment;
5. The designation of areas for the implementation of reasonable ground water protection measures;
6. An official map, a capital improvements program, a subdivision ordinance, a zoning ordinance and zoning district maps, mineral resource district maps and agricultural and forestal district maps, where applicable;
7. The location of existing or proposed recycling centers; and
8. The designation of areas for the implementation of measures to promote the construction and maintenance of affordable housing, sufficient to meet the current and future needs of residents of all levels of income in the locality while considering the current and future needs of the planning district within which the locality is situated."

Because of its long-range focus, the Comprehensive Plan is general in nature and indicates where future land use and facility changes may be expected to occur. It is intended that the Plan reflects the current objectives of local officials and citizens of the jurisdiction and is to be used in the decision-making process to prepare for anticipated conditions occurring within the next twenty years. Changes continually occurring within the community, however, require the Plan to be amended from time to time.

Plan Organization

The *2003 Town of Christiansburg Comprehensive Plan* is comprised of this Introduction as well as Chapters dedicated to Location and Historic Overview, Population and Demographics, Economy, Housing, Community Facilities and Services, Transportation, Utilities and Communications, and Natural Environment and Existing Land Use. These sections provide a general community profile and serve as an analysis of existing conditions. They also serve as the basis for assessing the viability of Christiansburg's economy and its potential for future growth and development.

This Comprehensive Plan also contains Chapters dedicated to a Summary of Planning Factors, Land Use Plan, Transportation Plan, and Utilities and Services Plan (Chapter X), Goals, Objectives, and Strategies (Chapter XI), and Policies and Plan Implementation (Chapter XII). The Summary of Planning Factors, Land Use Plan, Transportation Plan, and Utilities and Services Plan sections of the document aid in directing all future growth and development. It is a compilation of all plan elements. Its importance lies in recommendations for future land use, transportation facilities, and utilities and services.

Goals, Objectives, and Strategies are derived from analysis of existing conditions and the visions identified by Town leaders of the role Christiansburg will serve in the future. Long-range goals and short-term objectives represent the building blocks for use in constructing policies that help implement the Comprehensive Plan. Policies and Plan Implementation present an overview of the key components and legal avenues available to Christiansburg's leaders as they administer the Comprehensive Plan. The Zoning Ordinance, Subdivision Ordinance, and Capital Improvements Plan are three principal implementation devices. The Policies and Plan Implementation section describes the potential role of these and other mechanisms in accomplishing the Plan vision for the Town of Christiansburg.

Previous and Future Comprehensive Plans

The Town of Christiansburg's first Comprehensive Plan was prepared by the New River Valley Planning District Commission and was adopted by Town Council in November 1975. The Town Planning Commission and the New River Valley Planning District Commission subsequently updated the Plan in March 1984. John I. Cofer and Associates, Inc. prepared an addendum to the Plan in 1988. K.W. Poore and Associates, Inc. prepared an additional update that was adopted in December 1993.

The current Plan update has been prepared for the upcoming twenty-year period from 2003 to 2023. Pursuant to Commonwealth of Virginia enabling legislation, "At least once every five years the comprehensive plan shall be reviewed by the local planning commission to determine whether it is advisable to amend the plan. "

Citizen Participation

An important component of any Comprehensive Plan is the participation of the citizens of the locality in the development of the Plan. Christiansburg has held public input meetings, conducted citizen satisfaction surveys, provided opportunities for comments in person, by mail, or via e-mail to the Town's homepage.

Citizen participation is not only a legal requirement, but is needed input to provide Town Council, the Planning Commission, and staff with information regarding the goals and visions of the community as a whole. Before the Town can take action to meet the wishes of its citizens, the Town staff and officials must know what the citizens truly desire.