



Hardy County Comprehensive Plan Update
August 2011—DRAFT 6
Amended August 2, 2011



Hardy County Comprehensive Plan Update





Hardy County Comprehensive Plan Update
August 2011- Draft 6
Ammended August 2, 2011



TABLE OF CONENTS

Appendix A: Definitions

CHAPTER ONE- INTRODUCTION (PAGES 1-7)

- Section 1.1 – Opening (pages 1-4)
- Section 1.2 – Demographic Analysis (pages 4-7)

CHAPTER TWO – THE PLAN (PAGES 8-51)

- Section 2.1 – Land Use (pages 8-11)
- Section 2.2 – Housing (pages 11-13)
- Section 2.3 – Transportation (pages 14-16)
- Section 2.4 – Infrastructure (pages 16-20)
- Section 2.5 – Public Services & Governance (pages 21-25)
- Section 2.6 – Rural (pages 25-28)
- Section 2.7 – Recreation (pages 28-32)
- Section 2.8 – Economic Development (pages 33-37)
- Section 2.9 – Community Design (pages 37-39)
- Section 2.10 – Preferred Development Area (pages 39-41)
- Section 2.11 – Renewal and Redevelopment (pages 41-42)
- Section 2.12 – Finance (pages 42-46)
- Section 2.13 – Historic Preservation (pages 46-48)
- Section 2.14 – Tourism (pages 49-51)

CHAPTER THREE – LAND USE PLAN (PAGES 52-68)

- Section 3.1 – Existing Land Use Plan (pages 52-53)
- Section 3.2 – Future Land Use Plan (pages 54-68)

CHAPTER FOUR – IMPLEMENTATION (PAGES 69-82)

- Section 4.1 – Overview (69-70)
- Section 4.2 – Implementation (pages 70-88)

CHAPTER FIVE – CONCLUSION (PAGE 89)



Hardy County Comprehensive Plan Update
August 2011- Draft 6
Ammended August 2, 2011



APPENDIX A

DEFINITIONS

Plan – Plan and comprehensive plan are used interchangeably in this document.

PSD – Public Service District

RDA – Rural Development Authority

Thicket – A thicket is a tight group of tall shrubs, often dominated by only one or a few species, to the exclusion of all others. They may be formed by species that shed large amounts of highly viable seeds that are able to germinate in the shelter of the maternal plants. In some conditions the formation or spread of thickets may be assisted by human disturbance of an area. Where a thicket is formed of any of a number of unrelated thorny plants, it may be called a briar patch

Timber Stand –For the purpose of this plan, a **timber stand** is a very dense stand of trees; often dominated by only one or a few species, to the exclusion of others. This is not to be confused with a thicket or a platform used by hunters.



Hardy County Comprehensive Plan Update
August 2011- Draft 6
Ammended August 2, 2011



CHAPTER ONE – INTRODUCTION

SECTION 1.1 – OPENING

Overview

West Virginia counties are authorized by State Code Chapter 8A, Article 3 to prepare a comprehensive plan to “guide a governing body to accomplish a coordinated and compatible development of land and improvements within its territorial jurisdiction.”

In addition to setting goals for land development, a comprehensive plan strives to accomplish a number of ideal factors for positive change, including the coordination of all governing bodies, the protection of natural, physical, financial and human resources, the preservation of historic and scenic sites and the efficient utilization of agricultural and rural land. The plan must also promote a sense of community, character and identity, while creating conditions that are favorable to health, safety, prosperity, transportation, recreation, and educational opportunities.

Hardy County’s comprehensive plan is a policy guide for the Planning Commission and the County Commission as they consider issues that affect the land and its resources, balanced against the ever-changing needs of the towns, businesses and residents. Plan policies and recommendations are to be implemented over time and as resources become available. The Hardy County Comprehensive Plan is being updated to ensure that future land use decisions are made in a coordinated and responsible manner that capitalizes on the county’s assets and improves the standard of living for residents and businesses.

History of Planning in Hardy County

The Hardy County Commission is established under the Constitution and Laws of the State of West Virginia. The County Commission operates from the County Seat in Moorefield. The County Commission serves as comptroller and appropriating authority for the constitutional offices and general operating units of the County.

Hardy County was created in 1786 encompassing 583 square miles, according to the Census Bureau, and its County Seat, Moorefield, is the fourth oldest town in West Virginia. The County is located in the Potomac Highlands region of West Virginia and is approximately 2.5 hours from Washington, D.C. and 3.0 hours from both Pittsburgh and Baltimore.



Hardy County Comprehensive Plan Update
August 2011- Draft 6
Ammended August 2, 2011



In March 1966, the Hardy County Commission passed an ordinance creating the Hardy County Planning Commission, which was charged with the development and planning for the county.

At that time, nine citizens and residents were appointed to serve on the Planning Commission. The members were not only to represent the concerns of specific areas of the county, but also the broader concerns of the county as a whole, including business, agriculture, education, transportation, public health and safety, land conservation and historic preservation.

The Planning Commission adopted – and the County Commission approved – the county’s first zoning ordinance on March 1, 1973. The ordinance was adopted for the purpose of promoting the health, safety and general welfare of the residents of Hardy County. The ordinance was to assist in developing land in an orderly and efficient manner, and to help regulate and restrict the height, number of stories, and size of buildings and other structures, the percentage of a lot that could be occupied, the size of lots, yards, courts and other open spaces and the location and use of buildings, structures and land for business, industry, residences and other purposes.

In addition, the 1973 Zoning Ordinance was to help provide for adequate light and air, to prevent congestion and the undue crowding of land, to secure safety from fire, panic and other dangers, to conserve the value of property, to provide adequately for schools, parks and other public requirements and also to help ensure that proper provisions were made for drainage, water supply, sewage and other needed improvements.

The 1973 Zoning Ordinance was enforced until it was nullified by the court in 1991. The ordinance was found to be out of compliance with state rules and regulations because it was adopted prior to the creation and adoption of a comprehensive land use plan and map for the County.

A new zoning ordinance for Hardy County was enacted on July 1, 2005.

The Need to Update the Comprehensive Plan

Hardy County adopted its first comprehensive plan in 1999, to establish a planning framework within which the various, and occasionally conflicting, activities and objectives of the county could co-exist, while providing logical and farsighted guidance for the future.

Other goals of the plan included:



Hardy County Comprehensive Plan Update
August 2011- Draft 6
Ammended August 2, 2011



- Encouraging growth and development in areas where sewer, water, schools, and other public facilities were available or could be provided without excessive cost to the community;
- Ensuring that growth and development were economically and environmentally sound;
- Promoting the maintenance of an agricultural base in the county at a level sufficient to ensure the continued viability of farming;
- Encouraging and supporting commercial, industrial and agricultural activities to provide for a healthy, diversified and sound economy;
- Promoting the conservation of the natural, cultural and historical resources and preserving the county's scenic beauty;
- Studying and advocating the maintenance and improvement of the county's transportation system so that people and goods can move safely and efficiently;
- Providing regulations that encourage safe, sound and decent housing for all residents of the county; and
- Giving citizens a chance to affect the course of planning activities, land development and public investments in Hardy County.

Since the adoption of the original plan, the county has seen improvements in its zoning and subdivision ordinances to further the objectives of the Commission and the wishes of the residents of the county. Transportation improvements have facilitated commerce and commuting between the primary population centers of the county as well as further identifying the gateway into the county from the east. The county has also seen emerging communities in areas such as Baker, triggering the need for discussions about where growth should occur over the next twenty years. This growth has also spurred discussions on the capacity of the County to deliver services to these sometimes remote areas.

Over the past several years, the county has also adopted a new flood plain ordinance, in addition to improving the permitting process. In order to improve customer service, the Planning and County commissions have increased staff in the Planning Office.

In addition to the work that has been done locally; changes in the regional, national and global economy have resulted in a heightened need to diversify the local economy. This update to the comprehensive plan will ensure that the Planning and County Commissions continue to make decisions that allow for the area's growth and change while preserving the county's values and quality of life.



Hardy County Comprehensive Plan Update
August 2011- Draft 6
Ammended August 2, 2011



Community Process

The update to the Hardy County Comprehensive Plan is driven by the Planning Commission and Planning staff, with input from individuals, businesses and other stakeholders throughout the county.

In addition to individual meetings with Planning and County Commissioners, the Planning staff distributed a county-wide survey seeking input from residents.

The process also included the organization and facilitation of meetings throughout the county.

This approach successfully identified issues, opportunities, constraints and attitudes among the widest possible spectrum of interests in Hardy County.

To complete the plan, the Hardy County Planning Commission contracted the strategic and comprehensive consulting services of the Sirk/Ford Initiative, LLC. Working with the Planning staff and under the guidance of the Planning Commission, SFI was tasked with reviewing existing documents, facilitating interviews, preparing socio-economic data and drafting the final plan.

SECTION 1.2 – DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS

Historical Background

Hardy County, which borders Virginia, was formed in 1786 and became a part of West Virginia when the state was created in 1863. Of the 55 counties in West Virginia, Hardy is among the fastest growing. It covers 583 square miles of land and has approximately 14,025 residents. Like much of West Virginia, Hardy County is a rural area. The county seat is at Moorefield, the fourth oldest town in West Virginia and one of two incorporated towns in the county. The other is Wardensville.

Population

Between April 1, 2000, and July 1, 2010, the U.S. Census Bureau (USCB) estimates that Hardy County's population grew by nearly 7.7%, while the overall population of West Virginia grew only by 2.5%. Some of this population growth is reasonably attributed to the



Hardy County Comprehensive Plan Update
August 2011- Draft 6
Ammended August 2, 2011



completed segments of Corridor H, including those that connect Wardensville, Baker, and Moorefield. As of the 2010 US Census, the population of Hardy County stands at 14,025.

As of 2009, USCB estimated that 5.9% of the county's population was under 5 years old, 22.1% was under 18 years old, and 16.1% was 65 years old or older. As of 2010, there were 24.0 persons per square mile, compared to 77.0 persons per square mile in the state overall.

Education

In 2009, the USCB reported that the percentage of persons 25 or older in Hardy County who were high school graduates was 79.3%. This was less than the statewide average of 81.6%. The percentage of persons in the county age 25 or older who have earned at least bachelor's degree was 10.1%. Again, this was less than the statewide average of 17.1%.

The Hardy County Board of Education oversees the following schools in Hardy County: East Hardy High School, East Hardy Early Middle School, Moorefield High School, Moorefield Middle School, Moorefield Elementary School, and the Moorefield Intermediate School. Moorefield is also home to the Eastern West Virginia Community & Technical College.

Housing

As of 2009, the USCB estimated that there were 8,131 housing units in Hardy County. The percentage of units in multi-unit structures in 2009 was 5.3%. The homeowner rate was estimated to be 79.6%, compared to 74.3% across the state. The median value of owner-occupied housing units was \$125,500. In 2009, approximately 40 building permits were issued.

In addition to its full time residents, Hardy County is a popular second-home and weekend destination for people seeking refuge from urban life in the Washington, D.C.-Baltimore metropolitan and other regions. The Lost River Valley in particular boasts a vibrant and culturally diverse second-home market.

Households & Income

As of the 2009 Census, there were 4,795 households in Hardy County with 2.81 persons residing per household. The median household income was \$36,484, while the median household income for the state was \$37,423. The percentage of persons living below poverty in the county was 13.3%, less than the 17.8% statewide average.



Hardy County Comprehensive Plan Update
August 2011- Draft 6
Ammended August 2, 2011



Employment

In 2008, the USCB reports that there were 282 private nonfarm establishments with paid employees in Hardy County. Persons employed in private nonfarm employment were estimated to be 5,279, which represents a .06% decrease from the 2006 estimate. Nonemployer establishments in 2008 numbered 823. The number of business firms in 2006 was 797.

According to the USCB, in 2009, the mean travel time to work for workers age 16 or older was 26.1 minutes—slightly more than the statewide average of 25.3 minutes.

Commerce

Manufacturing (namely poultry processing and furniture/cabinet making), is an important economic driver for Hardy County. In 2002, the USCB reported that manufacturers' shipments totaled \$525,123,000. Retail sales totaled \$88,017,000. The retail sales per capita in 2007 were \$9,736, which is less than the \$11,340 retail sales per capita statewide.

Agricultural Characteristics

Along with manufacturing, the dominant economic driver is agriculture. Agriculture also defines a way of life for many in the County, and figures prominently in defining the County's rural community character that residents and visitors find appealing.

According to the most recent National Agricultural Statistics Service of the United States Department of Agriculture, Hardy County ranks first among West Virginia's 55 counties in terms of (a) total value of agricultural products sold and (b) value of livestock, poultry, and their products. The 2007 Census of Agriculture reported that the (a) total value of agricultural products sold was \$148,029,000 and the (b) value of livestock, poultry, and their products was \$146,113,000. Hardy County ranked 8th in the state in terms of crops (including nursery and greenhouse) with a total value of \$1,916,000. The 2007 Census of Agriculture reports that the average per farm reporting sales was \$287,994.

Land in Farms

According to the 2007 Census of Agriculture, there were 514 farms in Hardy County, which is a 10% increase over the 468 farms that were reported in the 2002 Census. Of the county's overall acreage 134,357 acres are dedicated to farming, with the average farm size



Hardy County Comprehensive Plan Update
August 2011- Draft 6
Ammended August 2, 2011



being 261 acres. Of the land in farms in Hardy County, 45.2% is dedicated to woodland, 30.07% to pasture, 21.08% to cropland, and 3.42% to other uses.

Poultry

Hardy County is appropriately known as the “Poultry Capital” of West Virginia. According to the 2007 Census of Agriculture, Hardy County ranked 1st among the state for its value of sales of poultry and eggs (\$137,336,000). The county’s dominant poultry inventory items include (a) broilers and other meat-type chickens; (b) turkeys; (c) layers; and (d) pullets for laying flock replacement.

Other Livestock

Livestock other than poultry is also important to Hardy County’s economy and way of life. For value of sales, the county ranked 2nd in the state for hogs and pigs; 4th for cattle and calves; 8th for sheep, goats, and their products; 14th for aquaculture; 21st for horses, ponies, mules, burros, and donkeys; and 23rd for milk and other dairy products from cows.

Crops

Cropland is an important resource to Hardy County. Just over 21 percent (21.08) of all land in farms is dedicated to cropland. In terms of top crop items by acreage, Hardy County ranked 3rd in the state for (a) corn for grain; (b) corn for silage; (c) soybeans for beans; and (d) barley for grain. The county ranked 15th for forage (land used for all hay and haylage, grass silage, and green chop).

Tourism

Tourism in Hardy County is growing and has the potential to become an integral and important segment of the local economy. The tourism draw includes Hardy County’s rural and pastoral setting, numerous outdoor recreational activities, festivals, dining, retail shopping, and historical tours. Both Moorefield and Wardensville offer lodging accommodations. The Lost River Valley is becoming an increasingly popular tourist destination with inns, guesthouses, a hotel, cabin rentals, restaurants, and the Lost River Artisans Cooperative and Museum. Tourism in Hardy County is promoted and overseen in part by the Hardy County Convention and Visitors Bureau.

Recreation



Hardy County Comprehensive Plan Update
August 2011- Draft 6
Ammended August 2, 2011



Lost River is home to numerous outdoor recreation areas including the Trout Pond Recreation Area, Lost River State Park, and the George Washington National Forest. Nearly 52,000 acres of the National Forest, renowned for its outstanding programs that harbor habitat for many species of animals, cover the eastern portion of Hardy County. The County offers a range of outdoor recreational activities including, hiking, backpacking, camping, swimming, biking, horseback riding, hunting, and fishing.

CHAPTER TWO – THE PLAN

SECTION 2.1 – LAND USE

Overview

Hardy County is rich in land. Wide swaths of agricultural land have historically driven the economy. State parks and national forests stretch along the borders. Pristine rolling hills provide the scenic views and outdoor recreational opportunities that draw hikers, bikers, cyclists and explorers – as well as those seeking to build or buy homes with tranquil, natural surroundings.

The West Virginia State Code requires that the land use section of a comprehensive plan set forth goals and programs for land use. In Hardy County, this work must be undertaken with special care. The distribution of land in Hardy County, including commercial, industrial, agricultural, recreational, educational, public, historic, conservation, transportation and infrastructure, must allow for and encourage development, but it must also protect the views and rolling hills in which Hardy County is rich beyond compare.

Responses provided from citizens through the Hardy County Planning Commission questionnaire indicated that respondents favor growth around Wardensville (14 out of a total of 40 responses). Eight respondents said they would prefer to see growth around Moorefield and six respondents listed Corridor H as the area where growth should occur.

As a part of the Planning Commission survey, residents were given the opportunity to identify areas that should be protected from development. This question garnered the most responses on the survey, with a total of 74 citizens identifying preservation areas. Of the responses, 15 respondents stated that agricultural land should be protected from development, as well as historical sites. Lost River State Park was identified by 13 respondents, and 11 respondents listed George Washington National Forest and Hardy County flood plains as the next two areas where growth should be restricted.



Hardy County Comprehensive Plan Update
August 2011- Draft 6
Ammended August 2, 2011



Thirty out of 37 respondents stated that the rural feel and agricultural uses of the county should be emphasized. This overwhelming desire to maintain the rural character of the County resonates throughout the recommendations in this Plan.

Because of this specific vision for the County, this land use plan will identify ways to manage development throughout the County, as well as preserve environmentally sensitive areas, such as floodplains and steep slopes. Land use planning is not intended to impede growth, but instead to steer development toward areas that are most suitable.

Goal

The goals of the land use section of the Hardy County Comprehensive Plan are: 1) to promote logical, efficient, and well-organized land use patterns; 2) to guide and promote attractive, sustainable growth; and 3) to eliminate and reduce conflicts among various land uses.

Assets and Opportunities

- Long-standing agricultural economy
- New residential development
- Available land for future residential and commercial development
- Controlled sprawl
- Zoning ordinance
- New subdivision ordinance
- Scenic views
- Corridor H has opened up new land for development opportunities
- Partners such as RDA and Farmland Preservation Board support thoughtful development

Liabilities and Threats

- Farm numbers have risen, but acreage of farms have decreased
- Public does not come out for land use and/or planning meetings
- Zoning ordinance does not regulate enough
- Planning staff lacks administrative power in permitting process
- Some subdivisions are poorly designed
- No guidelines for hillside development or preservation
- No guidelines to protect viewsheds



Hardy County Comprehensive Plan Update
August 2011- Draft 6
Ammended August 2, 2011



- Too many warehouse-type land uses
- Industrial parks are under utilized
- Not enough effort has been made to involve the county's youth in planning and development

Recommendations

Land Use Policies

- Concentrate commercial development in identified growth areas in Wardensville along Route 55, Moorefield along Route 220, and in Baker near the Corridor H exit, while allowing for appropriately placed uses conducive to rural areas (i.e., veterinarians, small convenience stores, post offices, and bed & breakfast inns).
- Incentivize development in growth areas, as indentified in the Comprehensive Plan, around existing incorporated and unincorporated population centers.
- Explore the installation of utilities in Baker area to facilitate new residential & commercial development.
- Encourage residential development in areas like Baker and Lost River, where the market has already driven new projects.
- Consider creating four sectors for planning and managing development within the County: Wardensville area, Moorefield area, Lost River area and Baker area.
- Consider implementing sector planning for the county as a method of increasing stakeholder's participation in the development of specific areas.

Planning and Research

- Develop revitalization strategies for the County's unincorporated business districts.
- Identify and protect scenic vistas, especially those along Corridor H.
- Research and identify the need for development, preservation, protection, and planning for recreational and civic uses, such as camp grounds, shooting ranges, and equestrian parks.
- Promote and encourage fairs and festivals and support additional seasonal activities.
- Research and implement best practices as related to programs, services and development as a part of the county's decision-making process.
- Research future changes in the Subdivision Ordinance that provide regulations for commercial and industrial subdivisions in addition to residential.

Regulations

- Consider having the Planning Commission make changes to the Zoning and Subdivision ordinance that would reduce the number of public and quasi-judicial reviews by



Hardy County Comprehensive Plan Update
August 2011- Draft 6
Ammended August 2, 2011



allowing for greater latitude for site plan and subdivision review and approval by the County Planner.

- Support changes to the County's Zoning Ordinance that allow staff more administrative flexibility for waivers and interpretation.
- Preserve the rural look and feel of the County by developing stronger guidelines and programs that protect agricultural land, existing forests, waterways, water sources and scenic views along Corridor H.
- Define buffer areas, including setbacks, between agriculture and/or industrial areas and other uses, including residential.
- Develop guidelines for hillside development and/or preservation.
- Resist development in floodplains.
- Expand uses permitted in industrial parks to fill vacant parcels.
- Develop a preservation zone that allows the County to preserve land for future development.
- Protect and preserve the county's surface and groundwater resources.
- Protect and preserve historic sites and properties.
- Focus zoning on the mitigation of impacts and avoid over-regulating the use of property.
- Adopt a "Right to Farm" and "Right to Hunt" policy in the County.

Coordination and Communication

- Work with towns to develop overlay districts adjacent to town boundaries that support growth and development around existing population centers.
- Encourage communication between the County Planning Office, other authorities, RDA, PSDs and elected officials as a means to plan and manage growth.
- Consider developing benchmarks or measurements to determine whether market or development drives growth in expanding areas.
- Consider establishing Extra Territorial Jurisdiction (ETJ) zones adjacent to existing municipalities.

SECTION 2.2 – HOUSING

Overview

According to the U.S. Census Bureau; the population of Hardy County increased by roughly 1,356 people between the years of 2000-2010. During that same time, the total number of occupied units increased by half that amount, with owner-occupation increasing by 605 units.



Hardy County Comprehensive Plan Update
August 2011- Draft 6
Ammended August 2, 2011



Section 8A of the West Virginia State Code requires that the housing section of a comprehensive plan set goals and programs to meet the housing needs for the current and anticipated future residents of the jurisdiction, including new housing, improvements to existing housing stock and the adaptive reuse of buildings into housing.

Goal

The goals of the housing section of the Hardy County Comprehensive Plan are: 1) to identify areas well suited for future housing development; 2) to ensure attractive and sustainable design as a component of housing development; and 3) to strengthen the existing housing as well as the future of new housing.

Assets and Opportunities

- Consistent, if slow, growth in county housing
- Houses built for seasonal/temporary housing often become permanent residences
- Eastern Hardy County will be a location for second homes for the Winchester and Washington, DC, metropolitan areas
- Land off of Route 259 in Baker is suitable for residential growth
- Housing stock in and around Moorefield and other population centers should be preserved
- Strong subdivision ordinance

Liabilities and Threats

- Subdivision and zoning ordinances should ensure that new developments are compatible with surrounding land and have sufficient infrastructure
- Design of some residential subdivisions has been substandard
- Increased residential land uses adjacent to agricultural land could be problematic if not properly designed and/or buffered
- Subdivision development on repurposed farm land could contribute to sprawl
- Subdivision development could tax existing water and sewer lines if not properly regulated
- Current economic conditions could negatively impact anticipated growth and home sales
- Schools, roads and other public utilities may not be adequate to encourage and promote residential growth



Hardy County Comprehensive Plan Update
August 2011- Draft 6
Ammended August 2, 2011



Recommendations

Development Regulations

- Create ordinances that ensure the separation of residential areas from conflicting land uses (such as agricultural or industrial uses).
- Channel new residential development into and around existing population centers to discourage sprawl.
- Support residential development in some “growth areas,” such as Baker, where the market has already driven new projects.
- Define buffer areas and setbacks between agriculture, industrial, and recreational (hunting clubs) areas and other uses, such as residential.
- Develop design guidelines for residential subdivisions that encourage attractive and sustainable development.
- Develop design guidelines and standards for manufactured home parks.
- Amend the development ordinances of Hardy County to reflect CHAPTER 37: REAL PROPERTY, Article 15 (House Trailers, Mobile Homes, Manufactured Homes, and Modular Homes).
- Adopt a building code in order to preserve existing housing stock and ensure the longevity of future development.
- Retain existing and attract new residents of all economic levels by encouraging a variety of housing types throughout the county at a wide range of costs.
- Develop and legally declare, as part of every real estate deed / transfer of property title, that Hardy County is a Right to Farm, Right to Hunt county, in order ensure that buyers understand - prior to obtaining ownership - that these activities will be allowed to forever continue if not in violation of existing laws.

Incentives

- Provide density bonuses or other incentives to housing developments for the inclusion of amenities and improved public facilities, such as roads and recreational features.

Development Location Strategies

- Identify and develop retirement communities throughout Hardy County; preferably around population and service centers.
- Develop affordable housing in moderate to high density developments proximate to commerce, services, public transportation, and public utilities.



Hardy County Comprehensive Plan Update
August 2011- Draft 6
Ammended August 2, 2011



- Explore the installation of utilities in Baker area to facilitate new residential & commercial development.

SECTION 2.3 – TRANSPORTATION

Overview

Corridor H – “the road to everywhere” (at least in Hardy County) – has been the single largest transportation change to come to the area in several decades. The expressway has unzipped the landscape, allowing for easier movement between the two primary population centers of Moorefield and Wardensville, along with allowing easier access to areas like Baker, Lost River and Mathias.

The Corridor H Highway Transportation Project will be a great benefit to Hardy County and the surrounding region. This highway will provide better and safer road access for our businesses and our local residents. This road will also help lower costs of transportation for local businesses and residents.

While the main roads are in good condition, the secondary and tertiary roads need considerable improvement. This is a pressing issue in Hardy County, as roads and streets should be the conduit for optimal development, while providing a safe and efficient means for all modes of travel. The transportation network should accommodate the planned pattern of employment and institutional related facilities. While improvements are necessary, they should not be constructed in such a way as to produce severe and lasting impacts on the County’s stable residential and commercial areas.

Therefore, the WV State Code requires that, consistent with the land use component of the plan, the recommendations for transportation should identify the type and location of transportation improvements. The code also requires that recommendations for this section meet the goals intermodal needs of the jurisdiction, including provisions for vehicular, traffic, parking, railroad, pedestrian and bicycle concerns.

Goal

The goals of the transportation section of the Hardy County Comprehensive Plan are: 1) to identify issues and concerns that impact the needs of present users and additional future demand; 2) to support, plan and implement programs that ensure a safe and efficient transportation and circulation system; and 3) to maximize accessibility in and around Hardy County as a means of encouraging economic development.



Hardy County Comprehensive Plan Update
August 2011- Draft 6
Ammended August 2, 2011



Assets and Opportunities

- Corridor H has improved vehicle transit between the county's two population centers, as well as West into Grant County.
- Corridor H has created an opportunity for new commercial development.
- Opening Corridor H has created internal commuting patterns that keep West Virginia residents working and shopping in West Virginia.
- With I-81 to the east, I-68 to the north, and I-79 to the west, the county is easily accessible from the region.
- U.S. Route 220 and State Routes 55 and 259 traverse the county making the county accessible from points to the north, south, and east as well as points in between throughout the county.
- Two lane roads act as a traffic calming measure, discouraging motorists from speeding.
- Local air service is available only 15 minutes from Moorefield.
- National and international air service is only 2 hours away at Dulles International Airport.
- Potomac Commuter regional bus system offers a regular public transportation service.
- South Branch Valley Railroad completes the county access and transportation system.
- Rail service is provided for tourism uses.

Liabilities and Threats

- Secondary and tertiary roads are in poor condition.
- Traffic in Moorefield is congested at certain times during the day.
- Some subdivision development has been completed without adequate ingress and egress onto area roadways.
- Limited funding is available from the state for road improvements.
- Hardy County does not have a transportation study detailing the problems and priorities of the county's roadway system.
- Public transit is not available for daily transportation.

Recommendations

Coordination and Communication

- Local officials should work with the state to study traffic flow problems in the Moorefield area as well as undertaking a needs assessment for resurfacing, shoulder-widening and signal improvements throughout the County.



Hardy County Comprehensive Plan Update
August 2011- Draft 6
Ammended August 2, 2011



- Federal, state, municipal and private resources should be coordinated to develop programming that puts these limited resources to their highest and best use.
- Work with Potomac Valley Transit Authority and possibly heavy public transportation users such as Pilgrim's Pride, to increase access to public transportation in Hardy County.

Policies

- The County Commission should adopt an official transportation plan that identifies new corridors and/or rights-of-way for planned roads and whether substandard existing rights-of-way should be expanded. These rights-of-way and/or corridors should be dedicated as a part of approvals for future site plans and subdivisions.
- Hardy County should regularly analyze traffic conditions to identify transportation problems, such as unsafe conditions, congestion, infrastructure conditions, and determine priorities for improvements and necessary transportation circulation and access.
- As land use standards are reconfigured, steps should be taken to ensure that new land uses do not overburden the existing highway system.

Planning and Research

- A pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicle obstacle study should be performed to identify necessary improvements to provide for the safety of motorists, cyclists and pedestrians safe circulation patterns.

Regulations

- Limit commercial development along two lane roads with improper access and limited sight distance.
- Develop guidelines that will allow Planning Commissioners to be consistent and thorough in their assessment of traffic impacts when reviewing development plans.

SECTION 2.4 – INFRASTRUCTURE

Overview

Infrastructure is the basic services and facilities necessary for the local and regional geographic area to function. The term typically refers to roads, water supply, sewers, power grids, and telecommunications. Viewed functionally, infrastructure facilitates the production of goods and services; for example, roads enable the transport of raw materials to a factory, and also the distribution of finished products to markets. In some contexts, the term may also include basic social services such as schools and hospitals.



Hardy County Comprehensive Plan Update
August 2011- Draft 6
Ammended August 2, 2011



Using water as an example, residents in Hardy County have become more aware of potential problems because the poultry industry and poultry farmers requiring so much of the water supply. Most communities have learned from experience that clean water is one of their most valuable resources and that quality of life cannot be maintained without adequate methods of wastewater treatment and solid waste disposal.

Currently, most of the water services in the county are provided by private systems: individual wells, privately owned systems, natural springs, and, in some cases, cisterns. Publicly operated central water systems serve the municipalities of Moorefield and Wardensville, while also providing water to several thousand county residents outside the corporate limits, along with the Rig, Critestown, Hardy County Public Service District and Caldonia Heights water systems.

One of the most important considerations in modern infrastructure and public service issues is the development of regional partnerships to achieve maximum results from minimized resources. Specific solutions in our region include opportunities to:

- Encourage government cooperation across jurisdictional boundaries to maximize resources.
- Resist development in flood plains.
- Designate transportation corridors.
- Consider major new infrastructure.
- Identify essential “nuisance” land uses locations, including waste disposal.
- Provide and enhance essential services such as police, water and emergency personnel and resources.
- Protect agricultural uses such as crops and livestock while providing proximate essential support services.
- Consider policies and codes that encourage the best use of the land in a multijurisdictional area.

Responses provided from citizens through the Hardy County Planning Commission questionnaire indicated that respondents would most like to see the construction of public water and sewer lines along major roadways (13 out of a total of 48 responses). Nine respondents said they would like to see infrastructure construction in the Moorefield area. The third most frequent answer was a tie, with six respondents each, for Wardensville and “as demand requires.”

This section will, in accordance with the WV State Code, identify plans and programs for the proposed locations, capabilities and capacities of all utilities, infrastructure and facilities to meet the needs of current and anticipated future residents of the jurisdiction.



Hardy County Comprehensive Plan Update
August 2011- Draft 6
Ammended August 2, 2011



Goal

The goals of the infrastructure section of the Hardy County Comprehensive Plan are: 1) to ensure that the infrastructure system is of the highest quality in order to meet the current and future needs of its users; 2) to support, plan and implement programs that ensure high quality facilities and service to meet the present needs of residents and any additional future demand; and 3) to identify areas for the extension of services to underdeveloped and/or underserved areas in and around Hardy County as a means of encouraging economic development.

Assets and Opportunities

- Baker water project would create more opportunity for development.
- There is an opportunity to educate residents and developers about the benefits of using existing water services.
- The County has a number of partners, such as the municipalities and Hardy County Service District that can help address issues regarding water and sewer services.
- The County is declared as a Recovery Zone for bonding purposes.
- Hardy Telecommunication is working toward the installation, to be completed by 2013, of a fiber optic network that will deliver high speed internet service to every residence in Hardy County.

Liabilities and Threats

- Over-use, or overdraft, of the County's groundwater, can cause major problems to human users and to the environment. The most evident problem (as far as human groundwater use is concerned) is a lowering of the water table beyond the reach of existing wells. Wells must consequently be deepened to reach the groundwater; in some places (i.e. California and Texas) the water table has dropped hundreds of feet because of excessive well pumping. A lowered water table may, in turn, cause other problems such as subsidence. Groundwater is also ecologically important. The importance of groundwater to ecosystems is often overlooked, even by freshwater biologists and ecologists. Groundwaters sustain rivers, wetlands and lakes, as well as subterranean ecosystems. Groundwater is fundamental to the County's major ecosystems. Water flows between groundwaters and surface waters. Most rivers, lakes and wetlands are fed by, and (at other places or times) feed groundwater, to varying degrees. Groundwater feeds soil moisture through percolation, and many terrestrial vegetation communities depend directly on either groundwater or the percolated soil moisture



Hardy County Comprehensive Plan Update
August 2011- Draft 6
Ammended August 2, 2011



above the aquifer for at least part of each year. Hypoheic zones (the mixing zone of streamwater and groundwater) and riparian zones are examples of ecotones largely or totally dependent on groundwater. When we extract groundwater linked to a river system, we extract water from that river, even if the result is not evident for some time. And of course vice versa. Water management agencies around the country are still struggling to come to terms with this simple fact. Hardy County needs to quantify the impacts of the users in the County who tap into this valuable resource.

- The needs of certain agricultural and industrial uses (like poultry plants) strain the existing water system.
- Substandard water systems could restrict the growth of the county.
- Private services and wells are more susceptible to contamination.
- Bond issues for water and sewer improvements have lacked support.
- On occasion there has been a lack of coordination between the Planning Commission and the Hardy County Public Service District.

Recommendations

Administration

- The County should develop and implement a review and approval process, administered by the Planning Commission, to ensure concurrency with the County's Comprehensive Plan prior to the planning, design and/or installation of utilities by any County Public Service District.

Planning and Research

- Undertake a study to identify the major surface areas through which groundwater is replaced and designate such areas for natural resource uses or other land uses that would not threaten the quality of this resource.
- Adopt and administer a storm water management program that maintains and/or improves the quality of surface water, the primary source of water for the county's two municipalities.
- Develop a program in conjunction with the Natural Resource Conservation Service and Farm Bureau that would encourage local farms to use best practices in their agricultural operations in order to preserve and improve water sources.
- Undertake a water resources study to be used as a guideline for developing future potable water extensions and to prioritize water and sewer projects, so that competition for funds is not encouraged on the county level.
- Use the results of the water and sewer study to seek federal and state funding for county water and sewer improvements.
- Quantify the impacts of users who tap into the water supply.



Hardy County Comprehensive Plan Update
August 2011- Draft 6
Ammended August 2, 2011



- Work with Hardy Telecommunications to identify issues and opportunities related to the installation of their County-wide fiber optic network.

Regulations

- Wireless utilities, primarily antennas, should be unobtrusive in viewsheds while providing maximum utility service to residents, businesses, industries, and emergency services.

Coordination and Communication

- Work with Public Service Districts to install utilities in areas that have been identified as growth areas on the County's Comprehensive Land Use Map.
- Improve coordination between the Planning Commission and the Hardy County Public Service District.
- Work with state officials to construct new dams where necessary for water supply impoundments and flood prevention.
- Ensure that the Planning Commission will be able to advise, and work closely with, the Hardy County PSD to insure that water mains are of sufficient sizing to support fire hydrants for public safety. Areas of high density that do not have adequately sized lines should be prioritized and funding for upgrades should be sought by both entities.

Land Use and Improvement Policies

- Encourage and focus infrastructure improvements in the commercial growth areas in and surrounding Wardensville, Moorefield, and Baker (area around the intersection of Old Route 55 and Route 259).
- Explore the installation of utilities in Baker area to facilitate new residential & commercial development.
- Install public water and sewer utilities in areas identified by the County Planning Commission.
- Develop policies to provide for the optimum management of groundwater, the county's primary water resource for residents and businesses.
- Ensure that the Planning Commission, County Commission and Hardy County PSD consider housing/population and density when planning and improving the infrastructure in the County.
- Consider creating a means by which to accommodate input / recommendations to locate utilities in areas identified by the RDA, PSD, or private developers.

Financing



Hardy County Comprehensive Plan Update
August 2011- Draft 6
Ammended August 2, 2011



- Government bonds should be considered as an option to financing infrastructure improvements.

SECTION 2.5 – PUBLIC SERVICES & GOVERNANCE

Overview

Public services, including the institutions, services, and land intended for general use, are relevant to all groups of people in one form or another in their daily lives. With concerns ranging from crime prevention, to religious facilities, to medical care and institutional involvement, public services form integral parts of the social fabric of Hardy County. The county's quality of life, therefore, depends upon the proper management and development of public services.

In a county that has a Right to Farm Policy, residents and businesses must accept that public services in rural areas are not at the same level as urban or suburban settings. Road maintenance may be at a lower level. Mail delivery may not be as frequent because of distances. Utility services may be nonexistent or subject to longer periods of interruption. Law enforcement, fire protection, and ambulance service will have considerably longer response times. Snow may not be removed from some county roads for several days after a major storm. The first priority for snow removal is that school bus routes are normally cleared first. This Farm Policy should not be interpreted to mean that public services are not important; rather, public services are offered and delivered in a manner that is sensitive to the agrarian heritage of Hardy County.

As modern infrastructure and public service delivery become available in Hardy County, one of the most important considerations is the development of regional partnerships to achieve maximum results from minimized resources. Specific solutions in our region include opportunities to:

- Encourage government cooperation across jurisdictional boundaries to maximize resources.
- Resist development in flood plains.
- Designate transportation corridors.
- Consider major new infrastructure.
- Identify essential "nuisance" land uses locations, including waste disposal.
- Provide and enhance essential services such as police, water and emergency personnel and resources.



Hardy County Comprehensive Plan Update
August 2011- Draft 6
Ammended August 2, 2011



- Protect agricultural uses such as stock and livestock; while providing essential support services.
- Consider policies and codes that encourage the best use of the land in a multijurisdictional area.

This section will, in accordance with the WV State Code, identify plans and programs to coordinate land use, transportation and community facilities in order to provide equitable, efficient and cost-effective government services.

Goal

The goals of the public service section of the Hardy County Comprehensive Plan are: 1) to meet the current and future civic needs of the residents through an effective and efficient delivery system; 2) to ensure that a wide variety of public services are provided to residents based on use, need and demand; and 3) to ensure that public services and facilities meet the needs of all age groups, abilities and affiliations.

Assets and Opportunities

- Strong history of volunteerism in emergency service operations.
- A Local Emergency Planning Committee meets regularly to discuss issues with emergency responders throughout the county.
- The Office of Emergency Services is staffed and working to improve county emergency response.
- The county is now served by a 911 emergency line and Office of Emergency Services.

Liabilities and Threats

- Bond issues related to public service improvements have historically failed.
- The Moorefield Elementary School site is insufficient for improvements and adequate parking.
- The county lacks the variety of public services amenities necessary to attract large investment or employers.
- The Hardy County PSD does not coordinate the placement of utilities with the County plan.
- There is a lack of promotion and education on the importance of regionalism.
- Sixty percent of all child abuse and neglect cases opened in 2006 by DHHR in the Grant-Pendleton-Hardy region were in Hardy County – Source FITF strategic plan 2011-2012.



Hardy County Comprehensive Plan Update
August 2011- Draft 6
Ammended August 2, 2011



- Due to the economic downturn throughout the United States, incidences of homelessness are increasing in Hardy County.

Recommendations

Administration

- The County should hire an ombudsman to assist developers with navigating the regulatory process.
- The County Commission should hire a Volunteer Coordinator to coordinate the activities of all of the civic groups in the County. The Volunteer Coordinator could also recruit more volunteers to assist existing civic organizations as well as implement projects in the Comprehensive Plan.
- Increase awareness of, and access to, agencies and programs that work to educate and advocate for the preventable deaths of children and promote child abuse prevention and positive parenting messages.
- Work with Family Issues Task Force and other organizations and/or agencies to coordinate information about, and provide access to, services available to the families and children of Hardy County.
- Work with the Family Issues Task Force, municipal, county and state police, and other organizations and/or agencies that work to address substance abuse issues in Hardy County.
- Work with the Family Issues Task Force and other organizations and/or agencies that work to address incidences of homelessness in Hardy County.
- Increase access to local food and/or establish farmer's markets, particularly in the eastern portion of the County, including Wardensville.

Coordination and Communication

- Encourage communication and cooperative efforts among the Planning and County commissions, the Board of Education, community organizations, residents and businesses to assure the continued vitality of the area.
- Investigate opportunities for cooperation between the county, towns and the Board of Education to provide facilities and programs to area residents.
- Support partners and programs that provide opportunities for daycare, youth and seniors, such as after school programs, camps, health care and other programs.
- Include high school students in the planning process. Consider the creation of an at-large, non-voting seat on the Planning Commission for a student from the county's high schools.
- Work with the Hardy County Health and Wellness Center and the Wardensville Fitness Center to promote / develop / expand offerings at their respective centers and in the County.



Hardy County Comprehensive Plan Update
August 2011- Draft 6
Ammended August 2, 2011



- Work with community agencies and/or professional organizations to identify and address the needs of the county's aging population.

Land Use and Development Policies

- Education, police, fire, medical transportation, and medical clinics/hospitals will all maintain maximized efficiency when development is concentrated rather than scattered in sprawl.
- Public education facilities should be developed with adequate room for on-site expansion so that future development does not force fragmentation of resources.
- Schools should be near residential development so as to limit transportation requirements.
- Police, fire, and rescue services should be located on or near the best transportation routes.

Planning and Research

- Work with the School Board, and other organizations, to increase awareness of the need for bond issues or other funding to ensure the development of adequate educational and medical facilities for the county.
- Evaluate the need and opportunity for additional, expanded, or improved public services and facilities, such as fire and police substations, that offer a value-added quality of life and plan for their provision.
- Support the expansion of the Office of Emergency Services with new equipment and facilities.
- Develop a county website that serves as a comprehensive hub for residents, visitors and businesses in the county.
- Research methods by which the County Commission could incentivize property owners to raze dilapidated buildings.
- Provide education and awareness in the area of waste and waste management as a county perspective of resource management. Local, regional, and global air pollution and the destruction and depletion of forests, soil, and water; threaten the integrity of the county and its biodiversity and the heritage of future generations.
- Investigate the means by which the county manages its waste, including collection, transport, processing, recycling or disposal and monitoring. Management for non-hazardous residential and institutional waste in the county should be studied to determine whether the most appropriate means to manage the waste is by the county government or a private entity.
- Ensure efficient disposal of county waste while protecting citizens from exorbitant charges.
- Consider service contracts for private haulers to allow recycling stations and sites where residents can deposit solid waste for final bulk transmission to permanent disposal facilities.



Hardy County Comprehensive Plan Update
August 2011- Draft 6
Ammended August 2, 2011



Research how the county recycles materials and determine if there is a need for improvement. Recycling involves processing used materials into new products to prevent waste of potentially useful materials, reduce the consumption of fresh raw materials, reduce energy usage, reduce air pollution (from incineration) and water pollution (from land filling) by reducing the need for "conventional" waste disposal, and lower greenhouse gas emissions. Recycling is a key component of modern waste management and is the third component of the "Reduce, Reuse, Recycle" waste hierarchy

Regulations

- The county should develop a building safety ordinance as it relates to dilapidated buildings.
- The county should develop an ordinance to regulate the build up of household / material waste that may causes blight on certain properties.

SECTION 2.6 – RURAL

Overview

The history of an agricultural economy in Hardy County has ingrained a rural way of life on every section and facet of the area. Rural, in Hardy County’s case, truly combines the two primary meanings of the word, which include “of the country” and “pertaining to agriculture.”

While the word “agriculture” is concerned only with the occupation of raising crops, livestock or poultry, the word “rural” has a broader meaning, conjuring images of green, tranquil countryside, fresh, locally grown food, and friendly people who can easily trace lineage back to a single homestead. The quality of being “rural” is authentic to Hardy County and embraced by its residents. Because of this, it is important that Hardy County preserve its farming tradition and agricultural land use for reasons that are not only economic, but also cultural.

Agricultural land, in the context of Hardy County’s Comprehensive Plan, refers not only to tilled fields, but also open fields, pastures, and woodlands which are either prospects for additional farm acreage or are valuable as they are for the contributions to the environment and to the rural appearance of the County.

Hardy County is the only county in West Virginia where manufacturing jobs outnumber all other disciplines. Farming, animal feeding and a variety of agricultural activities are necessary to the county’s vitality, economy, culture, landscape, and lifestyle. Hardy County



Hardy County Comprehensive Plan Update
August 2011- Draft 6
Ammended August 2, 2011



recognizes agricultural operations as valuable, worthy of protection, and supports the right to farm in a manner consistent with generally accepted agricultural management practices.

In a county rich in agrarian heritage, residents of property on or near agricultural land in Hardy County should be prepared to accept as normal the inconveniences of agricultural operations. These may include, but are not limited to, noise from tractors, equipment, and aerial spraying at night or in the early morning; dust from animal pens, field work, harvesting, and gravel roads; odors from animal confinement operations, silage and manure; smoke from ditch burning; flies and mosquitoes; the use of fertilizers and pesticides, including aerial spraying; and movement of livestock and machinery on public roads. These perceived inconveniences are aspects of life in agrarian communities.

Consistent with the WV State Code and the vision for the future of Hardy County, plans and programs must be identified to prepare and manage the preservation, growth and/or decline of designated rural areas.

Responses provided from citizens through the Hardy County Planning Commission questionnaire indicated that the residents of Hardy County strongly support preserving the county's rural look and feel, as well as protecting agricultural lands.

The question of what areas of the county should be preserved garnered the most responses on the survey, with a total of 74 citizens identifying preservation areas. Of those responses 15 individuals stated that agricultural lands should be protected – ranking these areas the highest of all options listed. Lost River State Park and the George Washington National Forest ranked as the second and third most prized rural areas, with 13 and 11 responses, respectively.

In addition to the above questions, residents were asked whether the county should maintain its rural look and feel. The answer was a resounding “Yes.” Thirty out of 37 respondents stated that the rural feel and agricultural uses of the county should be emphasized as a part of land use and economic development decisions.

Goal

The goal of the rural section of the Hardy County Comprehensive Plan is to ensure that rural lands in Hardy County are protected, preserved and emphasized in all current and future development decisions, both for the economic and cultural good of the County.



Hardy County Comprehensive Plan Update
August 2011- Draft 6
Ammended August 2, 2011



Assets and Opportunities

- Long-standing agricultural economy.
- Viewsheds along Corridor H and in other areas of the county contribute to the rural look and feel.
- Rural lifestyle of county is a significant part of the cultural heritage.
- Some of the best farmland is located in floodplains.
- Hardy County is home to a great amount of nesting pairs of Bald Eagles.
- Hardy County is within the migration path of Golden Eagles.

Liabilities and Threats

- Children are also exposed to different hazards in a rural setting compared to urban areas. Farm equipment, ponds, and irrigation ditches, electrical service to pumps, livestock and territorial farm dogs may present real threats to children.
- Pressure for the development of hillsides is increasing as a result of farmland preservation and constraints for development within the floodplains.
- Farm land is being lost.
- No guidelines exist for hillside development or preservation.
- No guidelines exist for the protection and preservation of scenic views.

Recommendations

Planning and Research

- All rural residents and property owners are encouraged to learn about their rights and responsibilities in a Right to Farm County. These include obligations under State law regarding maintenance of fences and irrigation ditches, controlling weeds, keeping livestock and pets under control, using property in accordance with zoning, and other aspects of using and maintaining property.
- All normal and non-negligent agricultural operations may not be considered nuisances in Hardy County.
- Consider working with bird watching enthusiasts to nurture this activity in Hardy County.
- Encourage the youth of the County to get engaged in ecological preservation activities within the County.
- Consider preserving areas of nesting Bald Eagles.

Regulations



Hardy County Comprehensive Plan Update
August 2011- Draft 6
Ammended August 2, 2011



- Preserve the rural look and feel of county by developing guidelines and programs that protect agricultural land, existing forests, waterways, water sources and scenic views along Corridor H.
- Define buffer areas, including setbacks, between agriculture and other uses, such as residential.
- Recommend that the County Commission consider guidelines for hillside development and/or preservation.
- Recommend that the County Commission consider guidelines for viewshed protection and preservation, while still allowing for the development of private property.
- Preserve all A-1 river bottom cropland for farming, and prevent the encroachment of non-agricultural uses in the A-1 areas, where soils recognized nationally as important to the production of food lie predominantly within the county's flood zones.
- Preserve and encourage existing hunting and fishing activities through the preservation of, and guidelines for, timber stands, public stream access and other hunting and fishing activities and amenities.
- Ensure that confined animal feeding operations, excluding controlled environment housing for livestock, should be practiced in designated Agriculture Zones.
- Ensure that controlled environment, grazing, and light crop agriculture are permitted to be practiced in proximity to residential uses with proper use of setbacks, vegetative screening, and attention to wind borne sounds and odors.
- Language should be adopted into the county's land use ordinance regulating wind farms and wind energy collection.
- Encourage the growth of the agrarian industry in our county.

Policies

- Children's activities should be properly supervised for protection of children and the livelihoods of farmers.
- Land use policies should preserve and enhance the county's agricultural base.
- Agricultural policies should include, but not limited to, avian, cattle, poultry, sheep, swine, equestrian, goats, domesticated animals, and other livestock.
- Agricultural policies should include, but not limited to, livestock crops, harvested fruits and vegetables, timber, grains, wheat, and other organic materials harvested for agricultural purposes.

SECTION 2.7 – RECREATION



Hardy County Comprehensive Plan Update
August 2011- Draft 6
Ammended August 2, 2011



Overview

Owing to the rural lifestyle and look of the area, Hardy County has a number of outdoor attractions and community amenities that capitalize on its unique spaces and beauty. This section will, in accordance with the WV State Code and consistent with the land use component of the plan, identify goals and programs for the continued success and growth of recreational and tourism uses in the county.

State and local parks and recreational facilities are scattered throughout the county. They include facilities in both the Town of Moorefield and the Town of Wardensville. These parks have swimming pools and facilities for athletic events; including softball, baseball, basketball, volleyball, and tennis.

Additionally, the following parks and recreation areas are in the county:

- Lost River State Park, situated near Mathias off County Route 12, offers a swimming pool, cabins, restaurant, recreational center, tennis courts, horseback riding, hiking and other facilities for outdoor activities.
- The Trout Pond Recreation Area is located off County Route 16 between Lost River and Wardensville and includes the Trout Pond natural lake and Rockcliff Lake. Facilities are available at the Trout Pond Recreation Area for swimming, fishing, boating, hiking, and camping.
- The Kimsey Run Dam is situated near Lost River on County Route 14. This lake is used for flood control purposes but could also have valuable recreational purposes for the surrounding area. It is also used for non-gas engine fishing.
- A small part of Nathaniel Mountain is located in northern Hardy County.
- Short Mountain Hunting Area is situated in the northern reaches of Hardy County.
- The eastern part of Hardy County is encompassed by the George Washington National Forest.
- The Valley View Golf Course is situated approximately four miles south of Moorefield on U.S. Route 220. It has eighteen holes that are open for play. Valley View is open to the general public and currently has approximately 207 members.
- Baker Park is home to ball fields, a scenic overlook, walking trails, bathrooms, shelters, and playground equipment.
- Brighton Park, located outside the Town of Moorefield, is located along a river and contains picnic shelters, soccer field, softball fields, walking trails, playgrounds, bathrooms, and boat ramp.

Canoeing has become a major recreational activity in Hardy County. People come to Hardy County from nearby metropolitan centers for the purpose of canoeing on the South Branch of the Potomac River. There are four primary canoe routes: From the Petersburg Gap



Hardy County Comprehensive Plan Update
August 2011- Draft 6
Ammended August 2, 2011



Bridge at the Hardy-Grant County line to the Buzzard Ford Bridge outside Moorefield on County Route 13; from Buzzard Ford Bridge to the Old Fields Bridge north of Moorefield on U.S. Route 220; from the Old Fields Bridge to Sycamore Bridge and through the trough to Hampshire County. Also, persons canoe through the Trough for the purpose of observing the bald eagles that nest in that area.

Hunt clubs and properties are located in Hardy County. These properties, totaling 23,983.24 acres, are characteristic of the heritage of Hardy County and are regulated and protected. They include:

- Bears Heil (4,428.58 acres)
- Branch Mountain (2,108.00 acres)
- Hunters Ridge (1,506.90 acres)
- Cross Knob (1,852.00 acres)
- Grace Property (11,043.03 acres)
- Green Mountain (1,855.64 acres)
- Little Mountain (1,189.09 acres)

The following Community Centers are located throughout the county and help to serve as a meeting place for the various communities:

- Mathias Community Center
- Rig Community Center
- Peru Community Center
- Arkansaw Community Center (Old School House)
- Wardensville Community Center/War Memorial Building
- Kessel Community Center (Old School House)
- Inkerman Community Center
- Bean's Settlement Ruritan Shelter area
- Heishman Chapel Community Center

Other recreational areas/facilities include:

- Hardy County 4-H Camp
- Lost River Sinks Area Roadside Park between Baker and Wardensville, (no public access except across private property)
- Camp Hemlock (Trout Run – religious retreat)
- Lost River Retreat
- Several hunting clubs in the area sometimes offering shares for sale
- Warden Lake Public Fishing Area



Hardy County Comprehensive Plan Update
August 2011- Draft 6
Ammended August 2, 2011



- Wolfe Gap Campground
- Hawk Campground – in Hampshire County, accessible through Hardy County
- Hardy County Rod & Gun Club
- DNR recreation facility at Sycamore Bridge (boat ramp, fishing, and hunting)

As a part of the Planning Commission survey on development issues, residents were given the opportunity to identify areas that should be protected from development. This question garnered the most responses on the survey, with a total of 74 citizens identifying preservation areas. Of the responses, 15 respondents each stated that agricultural land should be protected from development, as well as historical sites. Lost River State Park was identified by 13 respondents, and 11 respondents each listed George Washington National Forest and Hardy County flood plains as the next two areas where growth should be restricted. In addition, 30 out of 37 respondents stated that the rural feel and agricultural uses of the county should be emphasized.

Known for its natural beauty, outdoor recreational opportunities and rural hospitality, Hardy County is the perfect setting for hunting and fishing, camping, hiking, biking, and a total range of activities for the outdoor adventurer.

Goal

The goals of the recreation section of the Hardy County Comprehensive Plan are: 1) to promote the importance of open public space for recreational and leisure activities as a development concept; 2) to protect and improve the county's existing recreation facilities and support opportunities for enhancement; and 3) to increase the economic, social and environmental viability of the county's recreational facilities as a means of encouraging tourism as an economic development strategy.

Assets and Opportunities

- A variety of recreational amenities and activities exist throughout the county.
- The county currently attracts a base of visitors who come into the area to pursue leisure activities.
- The Wardensville Visitor and Conference Center has opened along Route 55, the gateway into the county from Virginia.
- Corridor H has opened up additional scenic views that could be used to attract "leaf peepers" to the area.
- There is strong community and volunteer support for maintaining and improving parks and recreational facilities.



Hardy County Comprehensive Plan Update
August 2011- Draft 6
Ammended August 2, 2011



- The Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB) is working to attract tourism to the area.
- Support the success of the Moorefield Senior and Wellness Center.
- State Department of Natural Resources has added 4 public river accesses since 2000.

Liabilities and Threats

- No guidelines exist to protect scenic views in the county.
- Some of the parks and community facilities have maintenance issues.
- Not enough emphasis has been placed on the development of tourism as an economic generator
- There is no central coordination of recreational facilities or programs.
- Indoor facilities available to residents are limited or not available at all.
- The 4-H Camp is grossly underutilized.
- Lost River state park is underutilized.
- Historic battlefield sites are neglected.
- The Wellness Center, in Moorefield, is underutilized.

Recommendations

Coordination and Communication

- Work with the Convention and Visitor's Bureau (CVB) to evaluate the need and opportunity for additional, expanded or improved recreational facilities and plan for their provision.
- Work with community and professional organizations / agencies to improve information about, and access to, amenities in the County.

Planning and Research

- Investigate the feasibility of creating a committee to assist in the planning and funding of recreational improvements, both indoor and outdoor.
- Seek funding for, or a volunteer to, coordinate recreational services, needs, and opportunities through the county.
- Locate and develop property for camping and recreational vehicle parks.
- Develop a comprehensive, year-round recreational program for teens, seniors and other age groups.
- Undertake a study in the Planning Commission for the appropriateness of guidelines for the preservation of scenic views.
- Consider greater outreach in the County for ATV safety.

Regulations



Hardy County Comprehensive Plan Update
August 2011- Draft 6
Ammended August 2, 2011



- Consider the development of guidelines by the County Commission that ensure the preservation of scenic views.
- Preserve and encourage existing hunting and fishing activities through the preservation of, and guidelines for, timber stands, public stream access and other hunting and fishing activities and amenities.
- Consider the appropriateness of a buffer around the perimeter of registered hunting clubs and properties in Hardy County. The County Zoning Ordinance should include a definition of hunt clubs and whether they should be regulated.

SECTION 2.8 – ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Overview

Economic development is the process of creating wealth through the mobilization of human, financial, capital, physical, and natural resources to generate marketable goods and services. This element of the Comprehensive Plan provides guidance on improving the economic viability of the county. Without the establishment of a strong, diversified economic base, Hardy County will not be able to implement many of the strategies recommended in the Plan.

The purpose of this section, in accordance with WV State Code is to establish goals, policies, plans, objectives, provisions and guidelines for economic growth and vitality for current and anticipated future residents of the jurisdiction, including, but not limited to:

- Opportunities, strengths and weaknesses of the local economy and workforce;
- Identifying and designating economic development sites and or sectors for the area; and
- Type of economic development sought, correlated to the present and projected employment needs and utilization of residents in the area.

Responses related to economic development issues were provided from citizens through the Hardy County Planning Commission questionnaire. Primarily, residents indicated where they would prefer to see growth as the county moves forward on economic development issues. Through the survey, citizens indicated that respondents favor growth around Wardensville (14 out of a total of 40 responses). Eight respondents said they would prefer to see growth around Moorefield and six respondents listed Corridor H as the area where growth should occur.



Hardy County Comprehensive Plan Update
August 2011- Draft 6
Ammended August 2, 2011



Of additional consideration was the question of whether agriculture should continue to be emphasized as a driver for Hardy County's economy and lifestyle. Thirty out of 37 respondents stated that the rural feel and agricultural uses of the county should be a major consideration in the County's economic development decisions.

Leading industries and products in Hardy County include poultry, wood and value-added products, hay and grain, and livestock. Poultry is the major leading industry and accounts for over half of our employment. Wood and wood products account for approximately one quarter. Schools, government, agricultural, and service-related employment account for the balance of our employment. Not included in these estimates are self-employed persons or agricultural employment.

Hardy County, along with the rest of the counties of this region of West Virginia, will continue to have economic growth opportunities. These growth opportunities include retention of the existing jobs, new job creations including more highly skilled jobs, business diversifications, tourism related developments, new residents—especially those commuters from adjacent out-of-state areas and in-state residents in neighboring counties.

Goal

The goals of the economic development section of the Hardy County Comprehensive Plan are: 1) to promote the vitality of the county by creating an environment that is conducive to growing a strong and diverse regional economy; 2) to identify and implement policies that will foster economic development opportunities; 3) to identify and implement policies and guidelines that will reduce the negative impact of commercial, agricultural and industrial uses near residential development; 4) retain existing industries; 5) have adequate water supplies to serve both commercial and residential needs; and 6) expand infrastructure to meet current and future needs.

Assets and Opportunities

- Hardy County is generally among the counties in the State with the highest growth rate.
- Hardy County generally has among the lowest unemployment rates in the State.
- Hardy County's unemployment rate has traditionally been below the national average.
- Hardy County is among the largest manufacturing employment bases in West Virginia.
- Agriculture remains a viable economic basis for the county.
- The poultry business in the county has remained relatively stable.



Hardy County Comprehensive Plan Update
August 2011- Draft 6
Ammended August 2, 2011



- The county attracts a limited but stable tourist destination among individuals who come for the recreational and rural amenities.
- There are opportunities for the county, with the cooperation of the new Convention and Visitors Bureau, to enhance and expand the tourism industry in the county.
- The county has a Rural Development Agency whose goal is to identify, promote and foster economic development.
- The location of the county is within 150 miles of the metropolitan hubs of Washington, DC, and Cumberland, MD.
- Hardy County has three industrial parks that offer space to locate and grow industry.
- Eastern Community and Technical College contributes to employment and training in the area.
- The County should encourage the growth of emerging populations of people from different ethnic backgrounds.
- The Hardy County Chamber of Commerce provides a network and support structure for businesses and business owners in Hardy County.

Liabilities and Threats

- Poor secondary and tertiary roadways could be a hindrance to development.
- The county lacks the amenities that draw large employers and investment.
- The county has a limited labor force for jobs in the technology or research and development sectors.
- Not enough emphasis has been placed on the development of tourism as an economic generator.
- The Planning Commission, P.S.D., and the R.D.A. should improve their coordination and cooperative efforts.
- The county draws more warehouse space than commercial space, limiting job opportunities.
- The current zoning map does not support the type of economic development the county needs to diversify its economic base.
- Not enough effort has been made to involve the county's youth in planning and development.
- There is a lack of promotion and education on the importance of regionalism.
- Tourism is overlooked and underserved as an economic asset for the county.
- The RDA does not have specific programs to assist with small business start-ups or expansion.

Recommendations



Hardy County Comprehensive Plan Update
August 2011- Draft 6
Ammended August 2, 2011



Research and Planning

- Conduct a corridor management study to determine and encourage appropriate commercial and industrial development along targeted areas of Corridor H, as well as along Route 220 in and around Moorefield.
- Update the zoning map and ordinance to encourage a wider variety of commercial development throughout the county.
- Encourage the appropriate adaptive use of vacant or underutilized commercial and industrial properties
- Develop a county sign strategy for destination businesses and attractions located along Corridor H.
- Ensure that suitable areas of land are identified for the expansion of commercial and employment uses are reserved.
- Increase opportunities for the location of RV parks and camping facilities and encourage off-road recreational activities.
- Increase opportunities for economic development of small and medium sized businesses.
- Encourage the growth of the agrarian industry in the County.

Administration and Regulation

- Develop and implement a county review and approval process, administered by the Planning Commission, to ensure concurrency with the County's Comprehensive Plan prior to site identification, acquisition and development of any property by the Rural Development Authority.
- Consider implementing fewer restrictions on industrial parks to allow for a wider variety of uses.
- Update permitting (i.e. occupancy, use, and variances) procedures and provide greater administrative oversight for the planning staff to provide waivers and interpretations of the code.

Coordination and Communication

- Work with the RDA to expand business recruitment strategy to diversify Hardy County's tax and employment base through the attraction of office, service and retail uses, in addition to large industry.
- Work with the CVB and tourism-related businesses to encourage and expand seasonal recreational activities and tourism.
- Continue to support the efforts of the Chamber of Commerce to create a vibrant commercial environment in Hardy County.



Hardy County Comprehensive Plan Update
August 2011- Draft 6
Ammended August 2, 2011



Recruitment and Retention

- Implement more aggressive strategies in the county for business and industrial recruitment.
- Work with the Eastern WV Community and Technical College to develop programs that provide training to workers who need new skills or additional training to meet the employment needs of the medical, technological or research and development sectors.
- Assist local farmers to ensure that active farms are preserved.
- Appoint a panel of county stakeholders that will identify and develop a strategy to retain the Hardy County's youth and young families.
- Study opportunities and strategies to retain and recruit college graduates.

SECTION 2.9 – COMMUNITY DESIGN

Overview

Community design is intended to address the quality of buildings, streets, public spaces, green spaces and historical attributes– visual indicators of an area's economic and social stability. Communities that are stable and economically sound, with well distributed development, leave a positive impression on residents and visitors.

Community appearance can be enhanced and improved with projects and programs of all sizes. While some of these improvements may require a significant amount of investment, individuals and organizations that volunteer their time are also capable of initiating lasting improvements. Physical improvements can be made in small increments and yet bring significant changes in a community.

Consistent with the WV State Code and the vision for the future of Hardy County, plans and programs must be identified to establish community design principles that promote the community, character and identity of Hardy County.



Hardy County Comprehensive Plan Update
August 2011- Draft 6
Ammended August 2, 2011



Goal

The goal of the community design section of the Hardy County Comprehensive Plan is to identify and implement guidelines for building, infrastructure and landscape that improve and enhance their surroundings by fostering the rural look, feel, and historical context, of the County's existing conditions.

Assets and Opportunities

- Hardy County has concentrated main street areas in the population centers of Moorefield and Wardensville.
- The county has a number of scenic views that should be considered during development.

Liabilities and Threats

- The county historically has not had standards for design.
- Property owners and developers resist guidelines for the development of their property.
- Subdivisions have been built without design guidelines in place.
- Design covenants in residential developments discourage people from locating there.
- The county has not sufficiently regulated setbacks and buffer zones.
- Instituting design guidelines to protect property values would require extensive public education.

Recommendations

Design Guidelines

- Consider the development of county design guidelines that frame and protect the county's scenic views.
- Consider the development of county design guidelines for residential subdivisions that include adequate green space.
- Consider the development of county guidelines for preservation and improvement of the existing "downtown" areas.

Regulations

- The Planning Commission should clarify the difference between setbacks (the distance between a property line and a structure or improvement) and buffers (a zonal area that



Hardy County Comprehensive Plan Update
August 2011- Draft 6
Ammended August 2, 2011



keeps two or more uses separate from one another; generally in the form of an undisturbed or unimproved area) in the County Zoning Ordinance. While clarifying the difference between the two site design criteria, they should determine the appropriateness of each between the varieties of incompatible uses in the Zoning Ordinance.

- Identify and establish appropriate setbacks for residential and commercial development.
- Identify and establish appropriate setbacks for development along Corridor H.
- The County should consider requiring buffer zones between residential uses and other uses, including agricultural, commercial, industrial, and active and passive recreational uses.

Programs

- Develop a comprehensive, year-round recreational program for teens, seniors and other age groups.

SECTION 2.10 – PREFERRED DEVELOPMENT AREAS

Overview

Establishing preferred development areas allows for the correction of problems stemming from poorly planned or negative historical growth patterns. In accordance with the WV State Code, jurisdictions may develop incentives that encourage growth in preferred development areas, either through new structures, infill or redevelopment.

To prevent sprawl, preferred development areas should be concentrated around existing development and be able to tie into existing roads, water and sewer infrastructure. In addition, development patterns in these areas should provide for a mix of uses.

While preferred development areas identify sections of the county that are well suited for growth, it is important to note that development areas are not the only locations where growth can occur. Instead, the concept seeks to identify areas that have distinct advantages, such as proximity to major roadways, water and sewer services, and critical mass.

Responses provided from citizens through the Hardy County Planning Commission questionnaire indicated that respondents favor growth around Wardensville (14 out of a total of 40 responses). Eight respondents said they would prefer to see growth around Moorefield and six respondents listed Corridor H as the area where growth should occur.



Hardy County Comprehensive Plan Update
August 2011- Draft 6
Ammended August 2, 2011



Thirty out of 37 respondents stated that the rural feel and agricultural uses of the county should be emphasized as a part of land use and economic development decisions.

Goal

The goals of the preferred development areas section of the Hardy County Comprehensive Plan are: 1) to provide a rational pattern for future land development that encourages efficient and coordinated growth throughout the county; 2) to provide guidance and direction in indentifying areas most suitable for various types of growth; and 3) to encourage economical infrastructure improvements in coordination with development opportunities.

Assets and Opportunities

- Hardy County and its municipalities have made steady improvements to their water and sewer infrastructure throughout the county.
- Corridor H has opened up the county for development.
- Land is available near population centers to concentrate development.
- Existing industrial parks have not been filled to capacity.

Liabilities and Threats

- Existing industrial parks have not been filled to capacity.
- Unless growth is well-directed, the county may see an increase in sprawl.
- Without proper guidelines, new development could tax existing water and sewer infrastructure.

Recommendations

Land Use Policies

- Develop appropriate incentives to encourage growth, infill and redevelopment around existing population centers, including along Route 220 in and around Moorefield.
- Work with towns to develop overlay districts adjacent to town boundaries that support growth and development around existing population centers.
- Incentivize growth in the county's preferred development areas to be competitive with regional jurisdictions (i.e., tax abatement, subsidized utility service delivery, workforce training).



Hardy County Comprehensive Plan Update
August 2011- Draft 6
Ammended August 2, 2011



- Consider Baker, in addition to Moorefield and Wardensville, as a preferred development area and encourage the development of a master plan for this community that identifies infrastructure improvements, an appropriate mix of uses, and density of development.

Public Improvements

- Extend the levy on the north end of Moorefield to allow for development.

Regulations

- Expand uses permitted in industrial parks.

SECTION 2.11 – RENEWAL AND REDEVELOPMENT

Overview

As Hardy County continues to develop, efforts should be made to protect and promote the health, safety and general welfare of the county through the elimination and prevention of blighted and transitional areas. To accomplish this, guidelines must be established to encourage the renewal of existing vacant or under-used parcels through infill and redevelopment practices.

Successful redevelopment and renewal efforts can return cultural, social, recreational and entertainment opportunities, gathering places, and vitality to older population centers and neighborhoods. In addition, attention must be paid to the design of infill and or redevelopment projects to ensure that the new development fits the existing context.

In accordance with the WV State Code, blighted areas must be targeted in the comprehensive plan, along with goals and programs to encourage their renewal and redevelopment.

Goal

The goals of the renewal and redevelopment section of the Hardy County Comprehensive Plan are: 1) to sustain existing favorable conditions throughout communities in Hardy County by encouraging development in and around existing population centers; 2) to support non-profit and public partners performing redevelopment and renewal work throughout the County; and 3) to encourage private investment in the renewal and redevelopment process.



Hardy County Comprehensive Plan Update
August 2011- Draft 6
Ammended August 2, 2011



Assets and Opportunities

- The Hardy County Rural Development Authority works to encourage redevelopment.
- The Town of Wardensville has undertaken a major streetscape renovation to improve development conditions within the municipal business district.
- The Town of Moorefield is working on the development of a new sewer system.

Liabilities and Threats

- The county's population centers, Moorefield and Wardensville, have a number of vacant buildings in their commercial districts.
- Recent development has been sporadic, leaving stretches of undeveloped land between new projects.
- The recent national economic downturn may result in additional vacant residents and commercial structures throughout the County.

Recommendations

Coordination and Communication

- Work with the RDA to encourage redevelopment and renewal in industrial parks and commercial areas throughout the County.

Land Use Policies

- Work with towns to develop overlay districts adjacent to town boundaries that support growth and development around existing population centers.
- Develop appropriate incentives to encourage growth, infill and redevelopment in and around existing population centers in Moorefield and Wardensville.

Planning and Research

- Expand uses permitted in industrial parks.

SECTION 2.12 – FINANCE

Overview

Historically, the methods available to West Virginia cities and counties for the generation of capital improvement funds have been seen as impeding; rather than facilitating growth and



Hardy County Comprehensive Plan Update
August 2011- Draft 6
Ammended August 2, 2011



development. In general, the state's local governments do not generate enough revenue to undertake any significant projects beyond day-to-day operations. Receipts from Ad Valorem and Business and Occupation Taxes comprise the bulk of most general fund revenue, with the balance coming from licenses, charges, and fees collected in exchange for services being provided. With respect to these limitations, this section will not be an analysis of the funding sources available to West Virginia governments (although they are included in the West Virginia Public Finance Program in a report prepared by the Bureau of Business and Economic Research at West Virginia University). Instead, the funding strategies discussed in this section will, in accordance with State Code, provide financial strategies for the short and long-term recommendations that support the goals of the Planning Commission as outlined in the accompanying chapters of this document.

For the purpose of this Comprehensive Plan, only the recommendations that are related to capital improvements will be discussed. The responsibilities of Hardy County in other areas such as the delivery of information to the public to broaden their knowledge, the collaboration with partners to implement recommendations, and the undertaking of additional studies and assessments is viewed as programmatic recommendations and not projected to impact the fiscal resources of Hardy County. The examination of capital improvements will include those non-recurring expenditures or any expenditure for physical improvements, including costs for acquisition of existing buildings, land, or interests in land; construction of new buildings or other structures, including additions and major alterations; construction of streets and highways or utility lines; acquisition of fixed equipment; or landscaping.

The Code of West Virginia requires that the county adopt a balanced budget. The county maintains extensive budgetary controls at all levels of operation. Legal compliance with expenditures is mandatory to comply with all laws and administrative regulations of the State of West Virginia. Any revisions that alter the total expenditures of any agency or fund must be approved by the County Commission and, where applicable, submitted to the State Auditor as Chief Inspector of public office for approval.

Under the county's budgetary process, outstanding encumbrances at the end of the fiscal year are reported as reservations of fund balance and do not constitute expenditures or liabilities since the commitments will be re-appropriated in the subsequent fiscal year. All appropriations lapse at the fiscal year end.

Types of Funds in Hardy County

West Virginia Code requires counties to maintain certain basic funds and allows the county to create funds for specific revenues. The county has the following types of funds:



Hardy County Comprehensive Plan Update
August 2011- Draft 6
Ammended August 2, 2011



- Government Funds: Most of the county's basic services are included in the governmental funds which focus on (1) cash and other financial assets that can readily be converted to cash flow in and out and (2) the balance left at the year-end that are available for spending. Consequently, the governmental fund statements provide a detailed short-term view that helps you determine whether there are more or fewer financial resources that can be spent in the near future to finance county's programs. The General Fund is the main operating account of the county and consequently, the largest of the governmental funds.
- Fiduciary Funds (Agency Funds): The County is the fiduciary for several other entities. The county is responsible for other assets that can be used only for their intended purpose. All the county's fiduciary activities are reported in separate statements of fiduciary net assets and changes in fiduciary net assets.

Goal

Recognizing that West Virginia municipalities are statutorily limited in their ability to generate revenue to implement capital improvements, the goals of the Hardy County Comprehensive Plan for financing are: 1) to develop sound financial strategies for the implementation of any and all improvements recommended in the plan; 2) to analyze the existing financial strategy for implementing improvements and examine alternative methods of funding; and 3) to develop relationships with public and private sector partners to maximize opportunities for the implementation of improvements.

Assets and Opportunities

- The County Commission is committed and continues to fund the constitutional offices and operating units of Hardy County.
- The County Commission has always pledged its full support for the continued development and construction of water and sewer infrastructure projects through the Rural Development Authority and Public Service District.
- The County Commission funds and supports its programs geared toward the provision of fire and ambulance services, expansion and attraction of new and existing industrial uses, businesses, and individuals considering the County as a place to live or conduct business.
- The County Commission supports its Planning Commission in their efforts to plan for the future of the County and administer its development.
- The County Commission supports various community organizations and works with communities to build and provide facilities and services to better serve its citizenry.



Hardy County Comprehensive Plan Update
August 2011- Draft 6
Ammended August 2, 2011



- The Hardy County Commission created a Hardy County Farmland Protection Board per West Virginia Code Section 8A-24-72. An increase in property transfer tax on sale of real estate is restricted for use by the Board in its efforts toward farmland preservation.
- Tax levies have changed little in the county due to the steady growth in the county and prudent fiscal management of the County Commission.

Liabilities and Threats

- The County Commission has not used government bonds to finance infrastructure and other public improvements.
- There is no capital improvement program in place to fund capital improvements recommended in the County's Comprehensive Plan.

Recommendations

Coordination and Communication

- Work with the RDA to encourage redevelopment and renewal in commercial areas throughout the county.

Improvement Financing Mechanisms

- The County Commission and Rural Development Authority should aggressively seek funding for infrastructure improvements to improve existing service and plan for future needs.
- The County Commission should consider government bonds to finance infrastructure and other public improvements.
- In anticipation of periods of excessive employment and population growth, the County Commission should consider placing fees on new development to help fund and pay for the construction or expansion of offsite capital improvements. These fees would help reduce the economic burden (i.e. infrastructure and services) on the County.
- The County Commission should develop an annual capital improvements plan addressing recommendations in the Comprehensive Plan.

Land Use Policies

- Work with towns to develop overlay districts adjacent to town boundaries that support growth and development around existing population centers.
- Expand uses permitted in industrial parks.
- Develop appropriate incentives to encourage growth, infill and redevelopment in and around existing population centers in Moorefield and Wardensville.



Hardy County Comprehensive Plan Update
August 2011- Draft 6
Ammended August 2, 2011



Research and Planning

- Identify the current method by which capital improvements are funded.
- Analyze the existing financial strategy for implementing capital improvement projects.
- Examine alternative methods for funding capital improvement projects.
- Determine role of partners in the government and private sectors in capital improvement projects.

SECTION 2.13 – HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Overview

The history of any community represents its identity and its culture and therefore should be protected through both education and preservation. These efforts can take several forms. Historic sites can serve as a monument to the past, while providing a place for gathering and celebration. An old church can still hold worship services similar to those held one hundred years ago. Old homes could be restored so they can continue as family dwellings or be refurbished as shops or offices.

Disregarding sites of historic and cultural significance can result in the deterioration of the character and identity of a community. If historic sites – including scenic vistas – are not protected, the heritage of the community will be lost forever.

Responses provided from citizens through the Hardy County Planning Commission questionnaire indicated strong support for the protection of the area's historic sites. The question of preservation garnered the most responses on the survey, with a total of 74 citizens responding. Of the responses, 15 individuals said historical sites should be protected from development. Agricultural lands also received 15 votes for protection, making these two assets the highest ranked preservation sites on the survey.

In accordance with the WV State Code, this section will identify lands or buildings that have historical, scenic, and/or architectural significance and identify plans and programs that prevent the unnecessary destruction of past development.

Goal

The goal of the historic preservation section of the Hardy County Comprehensive Plan is to enhance the quality of life for residents and visitors through the preservation of resources



Hardy County Comprehensive Plan Update
August 2011- Draft 6
Ammended August 2, 2011



that are significant for their architectural, archaeological, economic, educational, social and cultural value in the community.

Assets and Opportunities

- Hardy County has 10 Civil War Trails markers that are part of the national Civil War Trails tourism promotion program.
- The historic district in the Town of Moorefield.
- The 1864 Battle of Moorefield, located in Old Fields.

- There are 18 sites in Hardy County listed in the National Register of Historic Places:
 - The Willows, south of Moorefield
 - Mill Island, south of Moorefield
 - Willow Wall, north of Moorefield
 - Fort Pleasant, north of Moorefield
 - Henry “Light Horse Harry” Lee Cabin, west of Mathias in Lost River State Park
 - Old Hardy County Courthouse, Winchester Ave. & Elm St., Moorefield
 - John Mathias house, Mathias
 - Buena Vista Farms, Old Fields
 - Hickory Hill, US 220, south of Moorefield
 - The Meadows, US 220, south of Moorefield
 - Moorefield Historic Districts (portions of Main, Elm & Washington streets, and Winchester Ave.), Moorefield
 - Thomas Maslin house, Moorefield
 - Old Stone Tavern, Moorefield
 - Ingleside (aka, Judge J.W.F. Allen House) , Moorefield
 - Oakland Hall, US 220, Moorefield
 - Westfall Place, US 220, Moorefield
 - Wilson-Kuykendall Farm, US 220, Moorefield
 - P.W. Inskeep house, WV Route 55, Moorefield
 - Nicholas Switzer House, CR 5 and Waites Run
 - Lost River General Store, Route 259, Lost River
 - Francis Kotz Farm, SR 55, Wardensville
 - Henry Funkhouser Farm and Log House, Funkhouser Road, Baker
 - Garrett VanMeter House, Reynolds Gap Road, Old Fields
 - Stump Family Farm, SR 7, Brake

- There are nine properties that have been determined to be eligible for the National Register of Historic Places:
 - Abraham Inskeep house, County Route 10/3, Fisher



Hardy County Comprehensive Plan Update
August 2011- Draft 6
Ammended August 2, 2011



- William Hawse house, County Route 8, Needmore
- John Bott house, WV Route 55, Baker
- Baughman house, WV Route 55, Baker
- Francis Godlove house, County Route 23/10, Wardensville
- Valentine Swisher house, County Route 5, Wardensville
- Nicholas Swisher house, County Route 5, Wardensville
- Will Fisher farm, Fairview, County Route 10/3, Fisher
- Joseph Inskeep house, County Route 10/3, Fisher

Liabilities and Threats

- The county's historic buildings and sites have not been completely located and documented.
- Property owners may lack knowledge about the historical or cultural significance of their property.
- The county offers no incentives for the preservation or redevelopment of historically or culturally significant properties.

Recommendations

Planning and Research

- Identify properties and structures that are of historical significance and develop policies for their protection and preservation.
- Work with the Historical Society to identify and preserve historic sites in Hardy County.
- Work with civic groups and other government agencies to identify and preserve historic sites in Hardy County.

Development Regulation

- Develop community design guidelines that are sensitive to historic values and preserve historic sites and buildings in Hardy County.
- Develop community design guidelines that encourages new and infill development to build upon existing architectural features and character. Promote the practice of adaptive reuse for historic properties through the use of financial and regulatory incentives.
- Encourage compatible uses and proper buffers around all historically and culturally significant properties.
- Preserve / restore / promote Civil War sites and tourism in Hardy County.



Hardy County Comprehensive Plan Update
August 2011- Draft 6
Ammended August 2, 2011



SECTION 2.14 – TOURISM

Overview

According to the most recent data available from the West Virginia Division of Tourism, tourism was a \$3.9 billion industry for the state in 2006. In addition, travel spending has increased more than 10 percent annually since the year 2000.

Based on the projections contained in the study, the Potomac Highlands region sees well over \$250 million in annual tourism spending. Hardy County captured \$18.5 million of those dollars in 2004.

The money that is spent on these goods and services in West Virginia supports businesses that in turn employ West Virginia residents; including the 310 jobs generated in 2004 by the tourism industry in Hardy County.

Hardy County has a plethora of assets available to make the most of a growing tourism industry, from state parks, to scenic byways, to unique shops and crafts, to annual fairs and festivals. With the creation of the Hardy County Convention and Visitors Bureau in 2008, the county is poised to reap ever larger benefits in the future.

Through systematic development and land use strategies, Hardy County can pair growing tourism industry with the overarching desire of residents to maintain the rural look and feel of the area, while still creating an environment of increasing wealth and commercial viability.

To do this, the Planning Commission should focus on the following components of tourism in Hardy County:

- Attractions, accommodations and activities
- Reception services
- Tourist related facilities and services

Goal

The goal of the tourism section of the Hardy County Comprehensive Plan is to promote travel and tourism in Hardy County and throughout the Potomac Highlands region, so that



Hardy County Comprehensive Plan Update
August 2011- Draft 6
Ammended August 2, 2011



the economic benefit from tourism will enhance the local commercial vitality and quality of life.

Assets and Opportunities

- Wardensville Visitor and Conference Center located in the gateway to West Virginia and Hardy County from the east. The center offers bathrooms, Wi-Fi internet, conference facilities, telephones, and historic and cultural exhibits.
- Lost River State Park, situated near Mathias off County Route 12, offers a swimming pool, cabins, restaurant, recreational center, tennis courts, horseback riding, hiking and other facilities for outdoor activities.
- The Trout Pond Recreation Area, located off County Route 16 between Lost River and Wardensville, which includes the Trout Pond natural lake and Rockcliff Lake. Facilities are available at the Trout Pond Recreation Area for swimming, fishing, boating, hiking, and camping.
- Short Mountain Hunting Area is situated in the northern reaches of Hardy County.
- The eastern part of Hardy County is encompassed by the George Washington National Forest.
- The Valley View Golf Course is situated approximately four miles south of Moorefield on U.S. Route 220. It has eighteen holes that are open for play. Valley View is open to the general public and currently has approximately 207 members.
- Motorcycle enthusiasts regularly travel through and to Hardy County.
- The County has an emerging cycling community, including the training facility at the Raw Talent Ranch in the Lost River Valley.
- Local arts and crafts are showcased at the Lost River Artisans Co-Op.
- The Convention and Visitors Bureau was created in 2008 to enhance tourism.
- There are a handful of well-known lodges, including the Inn at Lost River and the Guest House at Lost River.
- The South Branch Inn regularly markets and promotes the region to visitors.
- The state and national parks feature a number of hiking trails.
- Hardy County is nationally known as a destination for hunting and fishing.
- Heritage Weekend is a successful annual event that brings tourists to the County.
- Canoeing is an emerging recreational activity in Hardy County.
- Bicycle paths along Corridor H.
- The land at the DNR-owned recreational facility at Sycamore Bridge.
- The scenic overlook of Clifford Hollow on Corridor H.
- Wardensville Fall Festival.
- West Virginia Poultry Festival.
- Hardy County 4-H Camp



Hardy County Comprehensive Plan Update
August 2011- Draft 6
Ammended August 2, 2011



Liabilities and Threats

- The Potomac Eagle does not currently have a depot in Hardy County.
- Hardy County has not traditionally marketed itself as a tourism destination.
- Some secondary and tertiary roads are not well paved for bicycle and motorcycle travel.
- Hunting activity has declined in Hardy County over the past 20 years.
- The Visitor and Conference Center in Wardensville is underutilized.

Recommendations

Coordination and Communication

- Work with the CVB to Discover, develop, and promote Hardy County's attractions and events as a tourism destination.
- Work with the CVB and Chamber of Commerce to promote and educate residents and businesses about tourism opportunities and positive impacts.
- Work with other jurisdictions in the Potomac Highlands region to effectively and efficiently promote travel and tourism.

Planning and Research

- Adopt strategies to promote tourism as a means of expanding Hardy County's tax base.
- Locate and develop property for camping and recreational vehicle parks.
- Recognize the value of heritage tourism, and its role in growing our local tourism industry.
- A scenic railroad depot should be constructed in Hardy County.
- Expand the festivals in the County to attract more tourists.

Regulations

- The County Commission should consider taking measures that preserve and encourage existing hunting and fishing activities through the preservation of, and guidelines for, timber stands, public stream access and other hunting and fishing activities and amenities.

Policies

- The County should support and encourage emerging motorcycle and bicycling interests in the County.
- Rail rights-of-way should include public trails from Brighton Park to Sycamore Bridge.
- The County should involve the youth in planning recreation and tourism activities and events.



Hardy County Comprehensive Plan Update
August 2011- Draft 6
Ammended August 2, 2011



- The County should work with the CVB, the WV Rail Authority and other entities to study the location and development of a train depot in Moorefield.

CHAPTER THREE – LAND USE PLAN

SECTION 3.1 – EXISTING LAND USE PLAN

Overview

This chapter provides an analysis of Hardy County’s existing land use. While land use is not static and is subject to constant change, such an analysis is useful for it gives a reasonably accurate assessment of the current development pattern in the County.

Summary and Analysis of Current Land Use

Hardy County has a rural, rolling landscape, with much of the land covered with farms, forests, state parks, and residences on large parcels. It also contains about ten small communities and two small towns of Moorefield and Wardensville. Commercial development occurs primarily on the main transportation corridors, State Route 55 and 259 and US Route 220, as well as in the towns. Public facilities such as schools and medical facilities are also predominantly located in the same places as commercial development and near community centers. There is a small amount of industrial land use and there are few manufacturing businesses in the County.

Looking at current zoning combined with existing uses provides a pretty good picture of the existing land use in the County. The Current Zoning and Land Use Map shows the current zoning of all the parcels in the County and also shows other uses. There are clusters of businesses along US 220 in and around Moorefield and along State Route 55/259 in and around Wardensville. Tourist-related commercial uses dot the landscape along State Route 259 in the Lost River and Lost City area. Commercial and industrial uses are also concentrated in the unincorporated area of Baker.

The following sections describe the current zoning districts and where this zoning exists in the County.

Amount of land in each zoning district

The County has established five zoning districts in its 583 square miles.

- Agricultural



Hardy County Comprehensive Plan Update
August 2011- Draft 6
Ammended August 2, 2011



- Residential
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Public

Almost all of the land that is in the county's zoning jurisdiction – 80% – is zoned agricultural and public (forest service or state park). Approximately 16% is zoned residential. The remaining 4% is commercial and industrial zoning. Very small amounts of land in the county are zoned for retail businesses and industrial uses.

Hardy County contains a lot of open land with fields, forests and rolling hills. A large amount of the land in the County does not have any buildings (or if there are old structures, they have little or no value). Large tracts of land contain private hunting clubs (24,620 acres), state or national parks (61,681 acres), state farms (992 acres), Department of Natural Resources Wildlife areas, and the Hardy County 4-H camp.

Amount of land by jurisdiction

The two towns in Hardy County are both small in population and small in size. Collectively they constitute only 4.2 percent of the County's land area. Moorefield is the largest town, with almost 1,400 acres in its town limits. Wardensville is smaller at 170 acres.

Land Ownership

Hardy County's central and eastern sections contain a large amount of US Forest Service or State Park land; accounting for 16.53% of the total land area in the County. The remaining land is almost all in private ownership.

Current Zoning Categories and Map

Hardy County was one of the first counties in West Virginia to adopt a zoning ordinance. It also has the following ordinances which govern aspects of land use: Subdivision Ordinance, Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance, and Communication Tower Ordinance. The Zoning Ordinance governs the types and intensity of uses that are allowed on parcels of land in the County. It also contains standards that must be met for development activities. The towns of Moorefield and Wardensville have their own land development ordinances that define the regulations within their jurisdictions.



Hardy County Comprehensive Plan Update
August 2011- Draft 6
Ammended August 2, 2011



SECTION 3.2 – FUTURE LAND USE PLAN

Land Use Planning Concept

Recommendations for the development of the County's future land uses are presented on the Future Land Use Map, which categorizes the overall development into eight districts.

- *Development Service Centers;*
- *Development Activity Centers;*
- *Community Centers;*
- *Rural/Agricultural Conservation Districts;*
- *Resource Conservation Districts;*
- *Neighborhood Conservation Districts; and*
- *Viewshed Protection Corridor Districts.*

The districts are described in terms specific to their respective roles in guiding and managing county growth and development. The description of plan districts includes discussion of the general types, intensities, and character of development that should be encouraged within these areas. Districts are derived from a combination of factors; including existing land use patterns; projected growth and development trends; the natural capacity and suitability of the land to support development; the availability and adequacy (existing and proposed) of infrastructure (such as roads, sewer, and water); and the community goals and objectives contained in this plan.

The Future Land Use Map and this accompanying text establish a framework and basis for further refined classification of land into zoning districts pursuant to comprehensive plan adoption. In addition to serving as a general guide for land use policy, the land use planning concept should also serve as a guide to county decision-makers regarding capital improvements programming for community facilities and infrastructure.

The following sections are dedicated to a detailed discussion of the districts:

Development Service Centers

A. Designation of Development Service Centers



Hardy County Comprehensive Plan Update
August 2011- Draft 6
Ammended August 2, 2011



The Comprehensive Plan identifies Moorefield and Wardensville as Development Service Centers. A Development Service Center is an area that generally has served, and is expected to continue to serve, as the principal residential, commercial, and industrial center for the County. These areas, by definition, comprise the more suitable locations for future growth and development in Hardy County. Growth, in and around these areas, will prevent the outward sprawl of development into other areas of the County and concentrate future residential growth in areas where residents can be provided with utilities, services, and employment opportunities in an economical and fiscally prudent manner.

It is important to note that the Development Service Centers are subject to greater development pressure than other areas of the county; particularly rural and/or agricultural areas. These centers have in place, or provide the opportunity to put in place, the kind of services required by development. These services include law enforcement, roads, water lines, sewer treatment facilities, and consumer needs.

The major challenge of the Development Service Center concept is to map, in advance, those areas where the county will accept a responsibility for providing infrastructure or will accept the responsibility for working with the development interests of the County to ensure that infrastructure is in place. However, this does not imply that the full cost of development will be borne by the county or municipal tax payer.

The Comprehensive Plan recognizes that the overall character of a Development Service Center, in contrast to other areas of the county, will be much more urban in character; in contrast to the rural, agrarian, and development sensitive natural settings in the county. Development Service Centers will be those areas where urbanization will occur if the county accumulates its share of the regional growth. To accommodate this growth, the county should be proactive with respect to planning and providing adequate infrastructure.

B. Planning for Development Service Centers

Ensuring high quality new development within the Development Service Centers is a major objective of the future land use plan. Future commercial and industrial forms of development, within these centers, should be carefully evaluated to ensure compatibility with existing and planned residential uses. Furthermore, permitted density and intensity should not be uniform throughout the Service Center. Also, existing single family neighborhoods should be buffered from non-residential and high-density residential developments.



Hardy County Comprehensive Plan Update
August 2011- Draft 6
Ammended August 2, 2011



Development Activity Centers

A. Designation of Development Activity Centers

The Activity Centers should accommodate the majority of the projected future county growth. This leads to the need to further refine the degree to which the location and form of development is managed within this area. Historic settlement patterns in certain locations, or proximity to the intersection of major county roads, suggests several areas that may serve as regional development centers within the County.

The designated Activity Centers in this Plan are: 1) Baker and 2) Old Fields. While the location and existing pattern of development has served as the rationale for their designation, each Activity Center identified in the Comprehensive Plan has a distinct quality or character that suggests a pattern for its future development.

Activity Centers represent opportunities to cluster future development into regional centers that serve the economic development, commercial services, and retail shopping needs of current and future county residents. Each Activity Center should provide opportunities to establish a recognizable center of development with its own unique sense of place within the county. Development within each Activity Center should vary based on the existing pattern of development and the future development mix that occurs.

Each Activity Center should generally include a mixed-use regional center for residential, office, retail and service development. Industrial development may also be appropriate in some Activity Centers. Industrial development should take the form of well-planned business and industrial parks. Each Activity Center reflects the unique character and the diversity of development that has evolved over the years.

B. Planning for Development Activity Centers

Preparation of more specific plans for each Activity Center should be undertaken by the county to identify how the qualities and form of their development may best be managed. The function of these areas is to serve as nodes of activity within the county. Adherence to this plan will concentrate higher density residential development, and the associated commercial, employment, and public service



Hardy County Comprehensive Plan Update
August 2011- Draft 6
Ammended August 2, 2011



functions in these nodes of activity. This land use management strategy will encourage a diverse mix of uses which will ultimately strengthen and enhance the viability of the respective community.

Development standards for Activity Centers should be framed to establish a clear sense of community character. Elements that should be included in the development of Activity Centers are: 1) mixed-use developments; 2) pedestrian access; and 3) greenways/bike paths linking various developments. A mechanism for the establishment of new Activity Centers, as the need arises, in the county should be developed. This will assure a means of managing development over time.

Standards for commercial and industrial development within Activity Centers should enhance the character of the community and create or reinforce a community theme. In many areas, this will require development or adaptive use of vacant or underused buildings.

Community Centers

A. Designation of Community Centers

Within the Rural/Agricultural Conservation District, there are existing villages and crossroad settlements that perform a number of important community functions. These settlements serve as centers for rural residential development and provide for commercial services for surrounding rural areas. The ability of these Community Centers to accommodate some portion of the future growth of the county is a function of their location and the existing scale of development and range of services provided to surrounding rural areas. Characteristics common to most of these rural Community Centers are the existence of homes, post offices, country stores, agricultural supply operations, home occupations, and structures which house public facilities or civic organizations (such as fire stations and churches). Each Community Center is very different in size, character and function and plays an important role in serving its surrounding area. Community Centers include Rio, Arkansas, Bean Settlement, Lost River, Lost City, Mathias, Perry, Rig, Durgon, and Peru.

The concept of the Community Center is included in the Comprehensive Plan in order to recognize and provide for the special needs of these rural centers. These Community Centers are often very different in size, character and function; however, each serves an important role to its surrounding area.



Hardy County Comprehensive Plan Update
August 2011- Draft 6
Ammended August 2, 2011



These rural service centers serve a multitude of functions in Hardy County. They range in scale from a fork in the road where a general store and souvenir shop are located, to a rapidly expanding community that is beginning to emerge as a service center of regional scope. Many have historic qualities, which suggests future development should be limited in scale and be compatible in character. Their distribution throughout the county is shown on the Future Land Use Map.

In spite of their unique individual qualities, these settlements share much in common and collectively they play an important part in Hardy County life. In general, Community Centers tend to be basically residential in character. They often offer some employment through limited commercial services as well as a public function as rural service centers. The county should preserve and enhance the present character of the Community Centers in order that it may continue to serve traditional roles in county life.

B. Planning for Community Centers

In the future, it is possible that additional Community Centers might be identified. However, their future designation should be a function of their need to serve as service centers in the context of their existing location in the county. These new Community Centers should be limited to providing the most basic commercial services for the convenience of the rural population.

Generally, the areas shown as Community Centers should:

- *Remain small in population size;*
- *Remain small in physical area;*
- *Continue to provide limited, highly localized commercial services (such as a gas station, general store or visitor/souvenir center);*
- *Continue to provide limited employment opportunity;*
- *Consist of a population density which is greater than the surrounding rural areas which they serve; and*
- *Maintain a unique "sense of place" as identified by their existing character, scale, density and architectural style.*

The need for central water and sewer is not anticipated in the Community Centers. The county recognizes that there will be exceptions to this policy. Some communities, for example, may have water. In other communities, where technology permits the feasible treatment of wastewater (i.e. where soils are potentially suitable), these systems (water and sewer) can allow greater clustering of residences and opportunities for commercial use in Community Centers. In order to



Hardy County Comprehensive Plan Update
August 2011- Draft 6
Ammended August 2, 2011



assure the continued small size of the Community Centers, any central water sewer system, which is eventually provided, should be built to serve land areas and development only within the immediate proximity of the Community Center itself and not extend into adjacent rural areas.

Rural/Agricultural Conservation Districts

The Rural/Agricultural Conservation District is intended to maintain and conserve rural character and farmlands in the county consistent with the Comprehensive Plan's objectives. Rural/Agricultural Conservation District land areas are intended to provide for a full range of agricultural and farming activities and related uses along with some low-density residential development.

The conflicts between farming and rural non-farm development (residential) should be minimized. As the needs of farming are acknowledged and non-agricultural land uses extend into agricultural areas, farms often become the subjects of nuisance lawsuits. As a result, farmers are sometimes forced to cease operations. Many others are discouraged from making investments in farm improvements. In recognition of the farmer's "right to farm" without being restricted by neighboring residential areas, hours of operation of farm equipment, restrictions on odor-producing fertilizers, and other restrictions designed to limit the perceived negative impacts associated with reasonable farming practices, no restrictions should be imposed on farming activities within the Rural/Agricultural Conservation District. The general intent of the Rural/Agricultural Conservation District is to encourage farming and maintain rural qualities in areas so designated in the county.

Rural/Agricultural Conservation, as a component of the Comprehensive Plan, is limited to traditional farming but extends to all aspects of the county's rural character. Agricultural land refers not only to tilled fields, but also open fields, pastures, and woodlands which are either prospects for additional farm acreage or are valuable as they are for the contributions to the environment and to the rural appearance of the county. Agriculturally-related or support industries (farm implement dealers, supply services, storage and process facilities, etc.) should be permitted within this District in recognition of their important support of the farming community.

A. Residential Density

Residential development and density in the Rural/Agricultural Conservation District should be minimized to avoid future conflicts between farming activities and rural homes. Two options are recommended for residential density in the



Hardy County Comprehensive Plan Update
August 2011- Draft 6
Ammended August 2, 2011



Rural/Agricultural Conservation District. A property owner or developer should be able to choose the option, which best suits his needs. The first density option is based on a sliding scale approach. Using this option, density is determined by the size of the parcel. The second option provides property owners the incentive of higher possible densities if certain standards of rural residential development are met. These density bonus incentive standards include such conditions as: development clustering, visual enhancement to reinforce rural character, rural highway access controls, and restricting sensitive lands or agricultural lands with conservation easements.

B. Sliding-Scale Approach

Under this option, the base density for lots of 20 acres or less should automatically be one dwelling unit per five acres. One additional lot should then be allowed for every additional 20 acres. A 100-acre parcel for example would yield eight lots. This provision is based on the assumption that parcels of twenty acres or less do not typically constitute adequate land area for productive farming operations. The disadvantages of this approach is that it will most likely cause the creation of large lot subdivisions which are land consumptive and do not promote conservation of agricultural lands. To off-set this condition, property owners using the sliding-scale approach should be allowed to reduce lot sizes through limited clustering provisions. Under this option, small lots (five acres and under) would be encouraged, but larger ones would also be permitted.

C. Density Bonus Approach

As an alternative to the sliding scale approach, property owners can opt for higher densities in return for residential subdivision design that better achieves rural character and agricultural conservation objectives. Under this approach, the base residential density in the Rural/Agricultural Conservation District should be one dwelling unit per 10 acres, but may be increased to one dwelling unit per eight acres or one dwelling unit per five acres if certain development standards are met as a condition of density increase.

Using this option, residential density in the Rural/Agricultural Conservation District should be determined as described below.

Base residential density of one dwelling unit per 10 acres may be permitted, provided:



Hardy County Comprehensive Plan Update
August 2011- Draft 6
Ammended August 2, 2011



1. *Clustering of development on the site provides for all dwelling units and lots to be located within 50% of the total site area of the parcel.*
2. *The remaining 50% of the site is permanently established as open space, either in farm or forest use, and restricted from further development through covenants or easements.*
3. *All residential lots created through the act of subdivision are served by one point of access to county roads.*
4. *Residential structures in the subdivision are located at least 100 feet from the existing county road right-of-way and screened from the right-of-way by an existing or landscaped buffer.*
5. *All residential structures are setback at least 100 feet from all active farm operations.*
6. *A central water supply system is developed.*
7. *Lots can be any size desired by the owner, typically ranging from one acre to five acres in size, provided the health department standards for septic systems are satisfied.*

Base residential density may be increased to one dwelling unit per eight acres if the following conditions are met:

1. *Clustering of development on the site provides for all dwelling units and lots to be located within 40% of the total site area of the parcel.*
2. *The remaining 60% of the site should be permanently established as open space, whether in farm or forest use, and restricted from further development through covenants or easements.*
3. *All residential lots should be served by one point of access to county roads.*
4. *Residential structures in the subdivisions should be located at least 150 feet from the existing county road right-of-way and screened from the right-of-way by an existing or landscaped buffer.*
5. *All residential structures should be setback at least 100 feet from active farm operations.*
6. *A central water supply should be developed.*
7. *Lots can be any size desired by the owner, typically ranging from one acre to three and a half acres in size, provided the health department standards for septic systems are satisfied.*

Base density may be increased to one dwelling unit per five acres if the following conditions are met:

1. *Clustering of development on the site provides for all dwelling units and lots to be located within 30% of the total site area of the parcel.*



Hardy County Comprehensive Plan Update
August 2011- Draft 6
Ammended August 2, 2011



2. *The remaining 70% should be permanently established as open space, either in farm or forest use, and restricted from further development through covenants or easements.*
3. *All residential lots created through the act of subdivisions should be served by one point of access to county roads.*
4. *Residential structures in the subdivision should be located at least 200 feet back from the existing county right-of-way and screened from the right-of-way by an existing or planted landscape buffer.*
5. *All residential structures should be setback at least 100 feet from active farm operations.*
6. *A central water supply system should be developed.*
7. *Lots can be any size desired by the owner, typically ranging from one acre to one and one-half acres in size, provided the health department standards for septic systems are satisfied.*

Through the clustering approach, the developer is able to decrease lot sizes in return for setting aside permanent open space. This provides many benefits including lower land costs for the lot purchaser and decreased road construction costs since lots are grouped together as opposed to scattered throughout the site. The community benefits through the provision of open space, farmlands and rural character. Despite the smaller lot size, the overall density of the subdivision remains unchanged.

Using this approach, a property owner with the 100 acre farm can create up to 20 lots (one dwelling unit per five acres) provided they are clustered onto 30 acres of the farm and the remaining 70 acres would be left for farming or open space. The homes would also have to be setback 200 feet from the county road and located on a single access road with driveways. Numerous individual driveways onto county roads would not be allowed. The homes would have to be screened from county roadway views, thereby protecting the rural character. Homes would also have to be setback from active agricultural operations in order to minimize farming impacts on home sites.

The same scenario on a 40 acres site would yield eight lots on 12 acres and would leave 28 acres in open space or farming. Average lot size for lots on both the 100 and 40-acre parcels would be 1 1/2 acres.

The open space land could be left in its natural state or maintained for farming or forestry purposes. Control of the open space land can be left with the original property owner or dedicated to a homeowners association. Regardless of which density determination option is used, the base density of a parcel or tract should be



Hardy County Comprehensive Plan Update
August 2011- Draft 6
Ammended August 2, 2011



calculated on the amount of grass area of land present. Land areas encumbered by natural development constraints, such as steep slopes, can be included in the base density calculation of a tract, provided the environmentally sensitive area is protected. Minimum lot sizes for clustered development in the Rural/Agricultural Conservation District should be a function of soil suitability for septic tank or alternative private sewage disposal systems.

The above described residential density provisions recognize that while rural character and agricultural conservation are important objectives, there remains a need to allow farmers and rural property owners to subdivide and sell single family home lots as the need arises. The Plan recommends that rural residential subdivisions be directed to areas of the Rural/Agricultural Conservation District, which have good proximity to existing residential areas and commercial and public services. Rural residential subdivisions should not be encouraged in remote areas where county roads are not adequate for increased traffic or in areas where existing agricultural activities predominate.

The Rural/Agricultural Conservation District is, therefore, provided in the Comprehensive Plan to preserve rural character and open space, to foster agricultural activities and opportunities, and to protect valuable natural resources. It is further intended to prevent premature urbanization in areas where public utilities, roads, and other public programs do not propose infrastructure suitable for development at higher densities.

Resource Conservation Districts

Hardy County's land development objectives indicate that special emphasis should be placed on the preservation of natural resources, sensitive natural areas, rolling hills, forest stands, and riverfront areas. Given the development pressures from the Washington, D.C, metropolitan area, there will likely exist demand for home sites in the county. Without a firm commitment to preserve the natural beauty and environmental resources in these areas, the county could find these important natural assets exploited.

The Future Land Use Map therefore designates land areas along all rivers, streams, and their tributaries as the Resource Conservation District. These areas include wetlands that are adjacent to tributary streams as well as floodplains, stream valleys, steep slopes, and soils with development constraints.

In most cases, only passive recreation use and low density residential development is appropriate in the Resource Conservation District; provided the development design is protective of environmentally sensitive features. The qualities of Hardy County's natural



Hardy County Comprehensive Plan Update
August 2011- Draft 6
Ammended August 2, 2011



resources are an important component of the county's heritage and a major factor influencing the county's continued economic and environmental well-being.

Performance standards for development within areas designated as Resource Conservation Districts should be framed to implement protection policies. Such policies or standards should provide that:

- *No development should be permitted on slopes exceeding 30% where soils are unsuitable;*
- *Development in flood plains should be limited and responsibly managed;*
- *Clearing of woodlands and forests should be minimized to the extent possible;*
- *In general, only very limited low density residential development should be permitted in those areas of the Resource Conservation District which are developable; and*
- *The State and private conservation organizations should actively pursue programs to purchase and/or acquire easements for privately owned lands in the Resource Conservation District so they can be preserved.*

Neighborhood Conservation Districts

Neighborhood Conservation Districts, which are not pre-mapped on the Future Land Use Plan Map, are established for residential subdivisions that already have been developed in the County. It is here that established densities may be inconsistent with those recommended for future development patterns. The Plan proposes a series of Neighborhood Conservation Districts to provide special treatment of these existing development conditions.

Creation of the Neighborhood Conservation District component of the plan is intended to minimize the concerns of existing property owners regarding the impact of new plans and development codes that will shift the future direction and location of development. Neighborhood Conservation Districts should help allay concerns about future development standards applying to existing residential areas. Future infill development in the Neighborhood Conservation Districts should be permitted to continue in the density and pattern for which respective subdivisions were designed at the time they were approved. This approach acknowledges existing development patterns and respects historic development conditions. Designation of specific Neighborhoods should occur when the county updates its zoning ordinance.

Implementation of the Neighborhood Conservation District concept should be accomplished through mapping of existing, larger county subdivisions and incorporation into the overall county zoning structure when implemented. The text of any future



Hardy County Comprehensive Plan Update
August 2011- Draft 6
Ammended August 2, 2011



ordinance amendments should permit their continued development and prescribe standards for protection of these existing residential neighborhoods.

Viewshed Protection Corridor Districts

A. Designation of A Highway Corridor District

The Highway Corridor District is intended to address architectural and aesthetic controls as well as special access and buffering requirements along the county's major highways. Designated Highway Corridor Districts are shown on the Future Land Use Map. The corridors along the following routes are designated as Highway Corridor Districts:

- U.S. Route 220 within Hardy County
- State Route 55 within Hardy County
- State Route 259 within Hardy County
- Corridor H (U.S. 48)
- County Route 7 (South Fork)
- State Route 29 (Sperrys Run Road)

Highway Corridors, as defined in this section, will encompass a land area to be determined at a future date by the County Commission.

The Highway Corridor District is an area within which certain specific public objectives relating to aesthetics and architectural plan review should be administered by the county through overlay zone regulations. Views afforded to drivers and passengers, in the major transportation routes in Hardy County, provide a lasting visual and therefore mental impression of the county's character. Although the visual experience forms only a small part of a person's overall experience in the county it remains, due to its pervasive nature and creation of an ambience for tourism purposes, of special public concern and requires public attention if the county's image is to be positive now and in the future.

Not all development in Hardy County requires the same level of public scrutiny. The most critical visual areas lie along the major transportation routes since all citizens and visitors share them. Hence, areas within view from the major transportation route right-of-way or within 1,000 feet from the right-of-way are identified and recommended for application of special landscaping and design standards.

The visual character along these highway corridors is diverse. The character ranges from areas that are primarily rural, natural and scenic to areas with disorganized



Hardy County Comprehensive Plan Update
August 2011- Draft 6
Ammended August 2, 2011



and cluttered roadside development. The objectives for the Highway Corridor District are not to preclude the diversity that already exists; rather, they are to encourage and articulate the variety of visual experiences along the current highways as well as along the corridor of the proposed future routes of the county's major roads.

The purpose of the Highway Corridor District is to protect and improve the quality of visual appearances along these linear corridors and to provide guidelines to ensure that buffering, landscaping, lighting, signs and proposed structures are internally consistent and of a quality that contributes to the county's character.

B. Planning in Highway Corridor Districts

Future development of lands, within the Highway Corridor District, may be subject to the standards of the particular base zoning district in which they occur as well as the following standards that are specific to the Highway Corridor District. These standards are not intended to restrict or prevent the construction of buildings within each corridor nor are they intended to require the removal of existing structures. The Highway Corridor District standards are not setback requirements, although certain minimum setbacks will be required to protect highway rights-of-way and maintain sight clearances for traffic safety.

Standards specific to the highway corridors may provide for:

- *Increased buffering requirements, which provide for a mix of canopy, understory tree, and shrub level plantings, to partially screen buildings and parking areas from view;*
- *Special standards for sign height, building design, size, materials, and lights to maintain and enhance visual qualities;*
- *Special consideration of new development within this district, including assessment of visual impact of development, assessing pre-development visual conditions, and how the proposed development will affect them;*
- *The acknowledgment that the existing villages are integral to the unique visual character of the corridor;*
- *Landscaping to soften lighting and groupings of signs to identify entrances to the site;*
- *The use of service roads as a tool to achieve access control within the Highway Corridor District;*
- *The use of reverse lot frontage concepts to shield off-street parking areas behind buildings and landscaping. A reverse frontage lot is a residential*



Hardy County Comprehensive Plan Update
August 2011- Draft 6
Ammended August 2, 2011



- *through or corner lot, intentionally designed so that the front lot line faces a local street rather than facing a parallel major thoroughfare; and*
- *The designation of scenic easements along highway corridors within significant natural views or vistas.*

Summary of the Land Use Planning Concept

The Future Land Use Map represents the cumulative application of the districts described earlier in this section. The map is, in reality, the result of an overlaying of separate maps, one representing each of the concepts presented. Whenever conflicts develop as to which category of use should apply, the more specific or highly restrictive category should govern policy. For example, the Resource Conservation District is the most restrictive and, therefore, would provide the overriding policies in the area where it is applied.

The basic intent of the land development concept is that the county channel most of its future residential, commercial, and industrial development into and around the Activity Centers, Planned Unit Developments, and Community Centers, and should preserve land in the Resource Conservation and Rural/Agricultural Conservation Districts. Existing residents' neighborhoods should be recognized and protected within Neighborhood Conservation Districts. The aesthetic and functional characteristics of major county roads should be preserved within the Highway Corridor Districts. The location of the districts will serve as the basis for county structuring of zoning classifications with the intent and purpose to frame land use controls and performance standards for development consistent with each Activity Center.

The Future Land Use Plan proposes to guide development to those undeveloped areas where major public facilities are in place or planned, while reducing development pressures in those areas where facilities cannot be provided as efficiently. The plan channels anticipated future growth into a more harmonious and efficient pattern that is consistent with community goals and objectives.

CHAPTER FOUR – IMPLEMENTATION

SECTION 4.1 – OVERVIEW

In order to implement this plan in a successful manner, it is essential to conduct a balanced planning approach. An overall balance of short term, long term, and continuous projects must be coupled with a plan for immediate implementation of some projects while also working on projects that require raising awareness or conducting more research.



Hardy County Comprehensive Plan Update
August 2011- Draft 6
Ammended August 2, 2011



The following table identifies each of the proposed projects, programs, and activities presented in this plan and assigns a time frame (S-Short term, L-Long Term, or C-Continuous) and implementation approach (A-Raise Awareness, I-Immediate Implementation, or R-Research is necessary). The activities are summarized correspond to their location within specific chapters of this plan.

The proposed activities identified as short range (S) are those which can be initiated within the first three years of the plan's implementation. Long range (L) activities are those which are to be considered after three years. Continuous (C) is a designation used for activities and programs which require continuous monitoring and attention.

Activities or programs will also require doing more research (R), drawing up an implementation plan (I), or raising awareness (A) before they can be implemented. To assist with this determination, the following questions must be answered:

- Does the problem require only a specific, short-term action?
- Could immediate action produce a visible improvement even though the problem may recur?
- Will the problem require long-term planning & implementation?
- Will the solution to the problem require continuous action?
- Do we need more information before we can take appropriate action on this issue or problem?
- Is this an issue or problem area for which we have done our research and have enough information to take action, but for which we have not yet developed a logical implementation plan?
- Is this an issue or problem for which we have done our homework to gather enough information to devise a realistic implementation plan, but for which we still need to do some public education before putting the plan into action?

Providing for a balance of short range, long range, and continuous projects is required to ensure continuous results throughout the implementation of this plan.

SECTION 4.2 – IMPLEMENTATION (REFER TO THE FOLLOWING TABLE)

	A	B	C	D	E
1	Section	Heading	Recommendation	S/L/C	A/I/R
2	Land Use	Policies	Concentrate commercial development in growth areas in Wardensville along Route 55, Moorefield along Route 220, and in Baker near the Corridor H exit, while allowing for appropriately placed uses conducive to rural areas.	C	I
3	Land Use	Policies	Incentivize development in growth areas, as indentified in the Comprehensive Plan, around existing incorporated and unincorporated population centers.	L	R
4	Land Use	Policies	Explore the installation of utilities in Baker area to facilitate new residential & commercial development.	S	I
5	Land Use	Policies	Encourage residential development in areas like Baker and Lost River, where the market has already driven new projects.	C	I
6	Land Use	Policies	Consider creating four sectors for planning and managing development within the County: Wardensville area, Moorefield area, Lost River area, and Baker area.	S	I
7	Land Use	Policies	Consider implementing sector planning for the county as a method of increasing stakeholder's participation in the development of specific areas.	S	I
8	Land Use	Planning & Research	Develop revitalization strategies for the County's unincorporated business districts.	L	R
9	Land Use	Planning & Research	Identify and protect scenic views, especially those along Corridor H.	S	I
10	Land Use	Planning & Research	Research and identify the need for development, preservation, protection, and planning for recreational and civic uses, such as camp grounds, shooting ranges, and equestrian parks.	C	R
11	Land Use	Planning & Research	Promote and encourage fairs and festivals and support additional seasonal activities.	C	I
12	Land Use	Planning & Research	Research and implement best practices as related to programs, services and development as a part of the county's decision-making process.	C	I
13	Land Use	Regulations	Consider having the Planning Commission make changes to the Zoning and Subdivision ordinance that would reduce the number of public and quasi-judicial reviews by allowing for greater latitude for site plan and subdivision review and approval by the County Planner.	S	R

	A	B	C	D	E
1	Section	Heading	Recommendation	S/L/C	A/I/R
14	Land Use	Regulations	Support changes to the county's Zoning Ordinance that allow staff more administrative flexibility for waivers and interpretation	S	R
15	Land Use	Regulations	Preserve the rural look and feel of the county by developing guidelines and programs that protect agricultural land, existing forests, waterways, water sources, and scenic views along Corridor H.	S	I
16	Land Use	Regulations	Define buffer areas, including setbacks, between agriculture and/or industrial areas and other uses, including residential.	S	I
17	Land Use	Regulations	Develop guidelines for hillside development and/or preservation.	S	I
18	Land Use	Regulations	Resist development in floodplains.	C	I
19	Land Use	Regulations	Work with the RDA to indentify the highest and best uses for the RDA's industrial parks to expedite infill development.	C	I
20	Land Use	Regulations	Expand residential, commercial, and industrial uses permitted in zoning districts.	S	R
21	Land Use	Regulations	Develop a preservation zone that allows the county to preserve land for future development.	L	R
22	Land Use	Regulations	Protect and preserve the county's surface and groundwater resources.	C	I
23	Land Use	Regulations	Protect and preserve historic sites and properties.	C	R
24	Land Use	Regulations	Focus zoning on the mitigation of impacts and avoid over-regulating the use of property.	C	R
25	Land Use	Coordination	Work with towns to develop overlay districts adjacent to town boundaries that support growth and development around existing population centers.	S	R
26	Land Use	Coordination	Encourage communication between the County Planning Office, other authorities, RDA, PSDs and elected officials as a means to plan and manage growth.	C	I

	A	B	C	D	E
1	Section	Heading	Recommendation	S/L/C	A/I/R
27	Housing	Regulations	Create ordinances that ensure the separation of residential areas from conflicting land uses (such as agricultural or industrial uses).	S	I
28	Housing	Regulations	Channel new residential development into and around existing population centers to discourage sprawl.	C	I
29	Housing	Regulations	Support residential development in some "growth areas," such as Baker, where the market has already driven new projects.	C	I
30	Housing	Regulations	Define buffer areas and setbacks between agriculture, industrial, and recreational (hunting clubs) areas and other uses, such as residential.	S	R
31	Housing	Regulations	Develop design guidelines for residential subdivisions that encourage attractive and sustainable development.	S	R
32	Housing	Regulations	Develop design guidelines and standards for manufactured home parks.	S	R
33	Housing	Regulations	Amend the development ordinances of Hardy County to reflect CHAPTER 37: REAL PROPERTY, Article 15.	S	I
34	Housing	Regulations	Adopt a building code in order to preserve existing housing stock and ensure the longevity of future development.	L	R
35	Housing	Regulations	Retain existing and attract new residents of all economic levels by encouraging a variety of housing types throughout the county at a wide range of costs.	C	A
36	Housing	Incentives	Provide density bonuses or other incentives to housing developments for the inclusion of amenities and improved public facilities, such as roads and recreational features.	L	R
37	Housing	Development Strategies	Identify and develop retirement communities throughout Hardy County; preferably around population and service centers.	L	R
38	Housing	Development Strategies	Develop affordable housing in moderate to high density developments proximate to commerce, services, public transportation, and public utilities.	L	R
39	Housing	Development Strategies	Explore the installation of utilities in Baker area to facilitate new residential & commercial development.	S	I

	A	B	C	D	E
1	Section	Heading	Recommendation	S/L/C	A/I/R
40	Transport"	Coordination	Local officials should work with the state to study traffic flow problems in the Moorefield area as well as undertaking a needs assessment for resurfacing, shoulder- widening and signal improvements throughout the County.	L	R
41	Transport"	Coordination	Federal, state, municipal and private resources should be coordinated to develop programming that puts these limited resources to their highest and best use	C	A
42	Transport"	Policies	The County Commission should adopt a transportation plan that identifies corridors and/or rights-of-way for planned roads and whether substandard rights-of-way should be widened. These rights-of-way and/or corridors should be dedicated as a part of approvals for site plans and subdivisions.	L	R
43	Transport"	Policies	Analyze traffic conditions to identify transportation problems, such as unsafe conditions, congestion, infrastructure conditions, and determine priorities for improvements.	C	I
44	Transport"	Policies	As land use standards are reconfigured, steps should be taken to ensure that new land uses do not overburden the existing highway system.	C	I
45	Transport"	Planning & Research	A pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicle obstacle study should be performed to identify improvements for the safety of motorists, cyclists and pedestrians safe circulation patterns.	L	R
46	Transport"	Regulations	Limit commercial development along two lane roads with improper access and limited sight distance.	S	I
47	Transport"	Regulations	Develop guidelines that will allow Planning Commissioners to be consistent and thorough in their assessment of traffic impacts when reviewing development plans.	S	R
48	Infrastruct.	Admin.	The County should implement a review and approval process, administered by the Planning Commission, to ensure concurrency with the Comprehensive Plan prior to the planning, design, and/or installation of utilities by any County Public Service District.	S	I
49	Infrastruct.	Planning & Research	Undertake a study to identify the major surface areas through which groundwater is replaced and designate such areas for natural resource uses or other land uses that would not threaten the quality of this resource.	S	R
50	Infrastruct.	Planning & Research	Adopt and administer a storm water management program that maintains and/or improves the quality of surface water, the primary source of water for the county's two municipalities.	S	R
51	Infrastruct.	Planning & Research	Develop a program in conjunction with the Natural Resource Conservation Service and Farm Bureau that would encourage local farms to use best practices in their agricultural operations in order to preserve and improve water sources.	L	R

	A	B	C	D	E
1	Section	Heading	Recommendation	S/L/C	A/I/R
52	Infrastruct.	Planning & Research	Undertake a water resources study to be used as a guideline for developing future potable water extensions and to prioritize water and sewer projects, so that competition for funds is not encouraged on the county level.	S	I
53	Infrastruct.	Planning & Research	Use the results of the 2004 water and sewer study to seek federal and state funding for county water and sewer improvements.	C	I
54	Infrastruct.	Planning & Research	Quantify the impacts of users who tap into the water supply.	C	R
55	Infrastructure	Regulations	Develop guidelines to prevent the intrusion of wireless utilities and primary antennas into designated viewsheds; while providing maximum utility service.	S	R
56	Infrastruct.	Coordination	The Planning Commission should work with the Public Service Districts to plan and install utilities in areas that have been identified on the Land Use Map.	C	I
57	Infrastruct.	Coordination	Improve coordination between the Planning Commission and the Hardy County Public Service District.	C	I
58	Infrastruct.	Coordination	Work with state officials to construct new dams where necessary for water supply impoundments and flood prevention.	L	R
59	Infrastruct.	Coordination	Ensure that the Planning Commission will be able to advise, and work closely with, the Hardy County PSD to insure that water mains are of sufficient sizing to support fire hydrants for public safety. Areas of high density that do not have adequately sized lines should be prioritized and funding for upgrades should be sought by both entities.	C	I
60	Infrastruct.	Policies	Encourage and focus infrastructure improvements in the commercial growth areas in and surrounding Wardensville, Moorefield, and Baker (area around the intersection of Old Route 55 and Route 259).	S	I
61	Infrastruct.	Policies	Explore the installation of utilities in Baker area to facilitate new residential & commercial development.	S	I
62	Infrastruct.	Policies	The Planning Commission should work with Public Service Districts to plan and install utilities in areas that have been identified on the County's Land Use Map.	C	I
63	Infrastruct.	Policies	Develop policies to provide for the optimum management of groundwater, the county's primary water resource for residents and businesses.	C	R

	A	B	C	D	E
1	Section	Heading	Recommendation	S/L/C	A/I/R
64	Infrastruct.	Policies	Ensure that the Planning Commission, County Commission and Hardy County PSD consider housing/population and density when improving the infrastructure.	C	I
65	Infrastruct.	Financing	Government bonds should be considered as an option to financing infrastructure improvements.	L	R
66	Public Service	Admin.	The County should hire an ombudsman to assist developers with navigating the regulatory process.	L	R
67	Public Service	Admin.	The County Commission should appoint a Volunteer Coordinator to coordinate the activities of all civic groups in the County. The Volunteer Coordinator could recruit volunteers to assist existing civic organizations as well as implement projects in the Comprehensive Plan	S	I
68	Public Service	Coordination	Encourage communication and cooperative efforts among the Planning and County commissions, the Board of Education, community organizations, residents and businesses to assure the continued vitality of the area.	C	A
69	Public Service	Coordination	Investigate opportunities for cooperation between the county, towns and the Board of Education to provide facilities and programs to area residents.	C	A
70	Public Service	Coordination	Support partners and programs that provide opportunities for daycare, youth and seniors, such as after school programs, camps, health care and other programs.	C	A
71	Public Service	Policies	Concentrate development around public services such as schools, police, fire, medical transportation, and medical clinics/hospitals.	L	R
72	Public Service	Policies	Work with the school board to plan for on-site expansion opportunities in the event of population growth.	L	R
73	Public Service	Policies	Work with the school board to locate schools near residential development so as to limit the need for transportation improvements.	L	R
74	Public Service	Policies	Police, fire, and rescue services should be located on or near the best transportation routes.	S	I
75	Public Service	Planning & Research	Work with School Board to increase awareness of the need for bond issues or other funding to ensure the development of adequate educational and medical facilities for the county.	C	A

	A	B	C	D	E
1	Section	Heading	Recommendation	S/L/C	A/I/R
76	Public Service	Planning & Research	Evaluate the need and opportunity for additional, expanded or improved public services and facilities, such as fire and police substations, that offer a value-added quality of life and plan their provision.	L	R
77	Public Service	Planning & Research	Support the expansion of the Office of Emergency Services with new equipment and facilities.	S	I
78	Public Service	Planning & Research	Develop a county website that serves as a comprehensive hub for residents, visitors and businesses in the county.	C	I
79	Public Service	Planning & Research	Research methods by which the County Commission could incentivize property owners to raze dilapidated buildings.	L	R
80	Public Service & Governance	Planning & Research	Educate and increase awareness of the importance of waste management. Local, regional, and global air pollution and the destruction and depletion of forests, soil, and water, threaten the county's biodiversity and its heritage for future generations	C	A
81	Public Service	Planning & Research	Investigate the means by which the county manages its waste Management for non-hazardous residential and institutional waste in the county should be studied to determine whether the most appropriate means to manage the waste is by the county government or a private entity.	L	R
82	Public Service	Planning & Research	Ensure efficient disposal of county waste while protecting citizens from exorbitant charges.	S	A
83	Public Service	Planning & Research	Consider service contracts for private haulers to allow recycling stations and sites where residents can deposit solid waste for final bulk transmission to permanent disposal facilities.	L	R
84	Rural	Planning & Research	Encourage all rural residents and property owners to learn about their rights and responsibilities in a Right to Farm County.	C	A
85	Rural	Regulations	Preserve the rural look and feel of county by developing guidelines and programs.	S	I

	A	B	C	D	E
1	Section	Heading	Recommendation	S/L/C	A/I/R
86	Rural	Regulations	Define buffer areas, including setbacks, between agriculture and other uses, such as residential.	S	I
87	Rural	Regulations	Consider guidelines for hillside development and/or preservation.	L	R
88	Rural	Regulations	Consider guidelines for viewshed protection and preservation, while still allowing for the development of private property.	S	I
89	Rural	Regulations	Preserve all A-1 river bottom cropland for farming and prevent the encroachment of non-agricultural uses in the A-1 areas.	C	I
90	Rural	Regulations	Preserve and encourage existing hunting and fishing activities through the preservation of, and guidelines for, timber stands, public stream access and other hunting and fishing activities and amenities	S	I
91	Rural	Regulations	Confine animal feeding operations, excluding controlled environment housing for livestock, to designated Agriculture Zones.	C	I
92	Rural	Regulations	Allow grazing and light crop agriculture to be practiced in proximity to residential uses.	C	I
93	Rural	Policies	Land use policies should preserve and enhance the county's agricultural base.	C	I
94	Recreation	Coordination & Communication	Work with the Convention and Visitor's Bureau to evaluate the need and opportunity for additional, expanded, or improved recreational facilities.	L	R
95	Recreation	Planning & Research	Investigate the feasibility of creating a committee to assist in the planning and funding of recreational improvements, both indoor and outdoor.	L	R
96	Recreation	Planning & Research	Seek funding for, or a volunteer to, coordinate recreational services, needs, and opportunities through the county.	L	R
97	Recreation	Planning & Research	Locate and develop private property for camping and recreational vehicle parks.	L	R

	A	B	C	D	E
1	Section	Heading	Recommendation	S/L/C	A/I/R
98	Recreation	Planning & Research	Work with community groups and the community on aging to develop a comprehensive, year-round recreational program for teens, seniors, and other age groups.	C	A
99	Recreation	Regulations	Preserve and encourage existing hunting and fishing activities.	S	I
100	Recreation	Regulations	Consider the appropriateness of a buffer around the perimeter of registered hunting clubs and properties in Hardy County. The County Zoning Ordinance should include a definition of hunt clubs and whether they should be regulated.	L	R
101	Economic Dev't	Research & Planning	Conduct a corridor management study to determine and encourage appropriate commercial and industrial development along targeted areas of Corridor H as well as along Route 220 in and around Moorefield.	S	R
102	Economic Dev't	Research & Planning	Update the zoning map and ordinance to encourage a wider variety of commercial development throughout the county.	S	I
103	Economic Dev't	Research & Planning	Encourage the appropriate adaptive use of vacant or underutilized commercial and industrial properties.	C	I
104	Economic Dev't	Research & Planning	Develop a county sign strategy for destination businesses and attractions located along Corridor H.	S	R
105	Economic Dev't	Research & Planning	Ensure that suitable areas of land are identified for the expansion of commercial and employment uses are reserved.	C	A
106	Economic Dev't	Research & Planning	Increase opportunities for the location of RV parks and camping facilities and encourage off-road recreational activities.	L	R
107	Economic Dev't	Regulations	Develop and implement a review and approval process to ensure concurrency with the Comprehensive Plan prior to development of any property by the RDA.	S	I
108	Economic Dev't	Regulations	Consider implementing fewer restrictions on industrial parks to allow for a wider variety of uses.	S	R
109	Economic Dev't	Regulations	Update permitting procedures and provide greater administrative oversight for the planning staff to provide waivers and interpretations of the code.	S	R

	A	B	C	D	E
1	Section	Heading	Recommendation	S/L/C	A/I/R
110	Economic Dev't	Coordination	Work with the RDA to expand business recruitment strategy to diversify Hardy County's tax and employment base.	C	I
111	Economic Dev't	Coordination	Work with the CVB and tourism-related businesses to encourage and expand seasonal recreational activities and tourism.	C	I
112	Economic Dev't	Coordination	Continue to support the efforts of the Chamber of Commerce to create a vibrant commercial environment in Hardy County.	C	I
113	Economic Dev't	Recruitment & Retention	Implement more aggressive strategies in the county for business and industrial recruitment.	C	A
114	Economic Dev't	Recruitment & Retention	Work with the EWV Technical College to develop programs that train workers with skills that meet employment needs of the medical, technological, or research and development sectors.	C	A
115	Economic Dev't	Recruitment & Retention	Assist local farmers to ensure that active farms are preserved.	C	I
116	Economic Dev't	Recruitment & Retention	Appoint a panel of county stakeholders that will identify and develop a strategy to retain the Hardy County's youth and young families.	C	I
117	Community Design	Design Guidelines	Consider the development of county design guidelines that frame and protect the county's scenic views.	S	I
118	Community Design	Design Guidelines	Consider the development of county design guidelines for residential subdivisions that include adequate green space.	S	I
119	Community Design	Design Guidelines	Consider the development of county guidelines for preservation and improvement of the existing "downtown" areas.	L	R
120	Community Design	Regulations	Clarify the difference between setbacks and buffers in the Zoning Ordinance.	S	I
121	Community Design	Regulations	Identify and establish appropriate setbacks for residential and commercial development.	S	I

	A	B	C	D	E
1	Section	Heading	Recommendation	S/L/C	A/I/R
122	Community Design	Regulations	Identify and establish appropriate setbacks for development along Corridor H.	S	I
123	Community Design	Regulations	The County should consider requiring buffer zones between residential uses and other uses.	S	I
124	Preferred Dev't Areas	Policies	Develop appropriate incentives to encourage growth, infill and redevelopment around existing population centers, including along Route 220 in and around Moorefield.	L	R
125	Preferred Dev't Areas	Policies	Work with towns to develop overlay districts adjacent to town boundaries that support growth and development around existing population centers.	L	R
126	Preferred Dev't Areas	Policies	Incentivize growth in the county's preferred development areas to be competitive with regional jurisdictions.	L	R
127	Preferred Dev't Areas	Policies	Consider Baker, Moorefield, and Wardensville as preferred development areas and encourage the development of a master plan for these communities.	L	R
128	Preferred Dev't Areas	Public Imprvmts.	Extend the levee on the north end of Moorefield to allow for development.	L	R
129	Preferred Dev't Areas	Regulations	Expand uses permitted in industrial parks.	S	R
130	Renewal & Redev't	Coordination	Work with the RDA to encourage development in industrial parks and commercial areas throughout the County.	C	A
131	Renewal & Redev't	Policies	Work with towns to develop overlay districts adjacent to town boundaries that support growth and development around existing population centers.	L	R
132	Renewal & Redev't	Policies	Develop appropriate incentives to encourage growth, infill and redevelopment in and around existing population centers in Moorefield and Wardensville.	L	R
133	Renewal & Redev't	Planning & Research	Expand uses permitted in industrial parks.	S	R

	A	B	C	D	E
1	Section	Heading	Recommendation	S/L/C	A/I/R
134	Finance	Coordination	Work with the RDA to encourage redevelopment and renewal in commercial areas throughout the county.	C	A
135	Finance	Improvement Financing Mechanisms	The County Commission and RDA should aggressively seek funding for infrastructure improvements to improve existing service and plan for future needs.	C	A
136	Finance	Improvement Financing Mechanisms	The County Commission should consider government bonds to finance infrastructure and other public improvements.	L	R
137	Finance	Improvement Financing Mechanisms	The County Commission should consider placing fees on new development to help fund the construction or expansion of offsite capital improvements.	L	R
138	Finance	Improvement Financing Mechanisms	The County Commission should develop an annual capital improvements plan addressing recommendations in the Comprehensive Plan.	S	I
139	Finance	Policies	Work with towns to develop overlay districts adjacent to town boundaries that support growth and development around existing population centers.	L	R
140	Finance	Policies	Expand uses permitted in industrial parks.	S	R
141	Finance	Policies	Develop appropriate incentives to encourage growth, infill and redevelopment in and around existing population centers in Moorefield and Wardensville.	L	R
142	Historic Preserv't	Planning & Research	Identify properties and structures that are of historical significance and develop policies for their protection and preservation.	C	A
143	Historic Preserv't	Regulations	Develop community design guidelines that are sensitive to historic values and preserve historic sites and buildings in Hardy County.	C	A
144	Historic Preserv't	Regulations	Develop design guidelines that encourages new and infill development to build upon existing architectural features and character.	L	R
145	Historic Preserv't	Regulations	Promote the practice of adaptive reuse for historic properties through the use of financial and regulatory incentives.	L	R

	A	B	C	D	E
1	Section	Heading	Recommendation	S/L/C	A/I/R
146	Historic Preserv't	Regulations	Encourage compatible uses and proper buffers around all historically and culturally significant properties.	L	R
147	Tourism	Coordination	Work with the CVB to discover, develop, and promote Hardy County's attractions and events as a tourism destination.	C	A
148	Tourism	Coordination	Work with the CVB and Chamber of Commerce to promote and educate residents and businesses about tourism opportunities and positive impacts.	C	A
149	Tourism	Coordination	Work with other jurisdictions in the Potomac Highlands region to effectively and efficiently promote travel and tourism.	C	A
150	Tourism	Planning & Research	Adopt strategies to promote tourism as a means of expanding Hardy County's tax base.	C	R
151	Tourism	Planning & Research	Locate and develop property for camping and RV parks.	L	R
152	Tourism	Planning & Research	Recognize the value of heritage tourism, and its role in growing our local tourism industry.	C	A
153	Tourism	Planning & Research	A scenic railroad depot should be constructed in Hardy County.	L	R
154	Tourism	Planning & Research	Expand the festivals in the County to attract more tourists.	C	A
155	Tourism	Regulations	Consider taking measures that preserve and encourage existing hunting and fishing activities.	C	A
156	Tourism	Policies	The County should support and encourage emerging motorcycle and bicycling interests in the County.	C	A
157	Tourism	Policies	Rail rights-of-way should include public trails from Brighton Park to Sycamore Bridge.	L	R

	A	B	C	D	E
1	Section	Heading	Recommendation	S/L/C	A/I/R
158	Tourism	Policies	The County should involve the youth in planning recreation and tourism activities and events.	C	A
159	Tourism	Policies	The County should work with the CVB, the WV Rail Authority and other entities to study the location and development of a train depot in Moorefield.	L	R



Hardy County Comprehensive Plan Update
August 2011—DRAFT 6
Amended August 2, 2011



CHAPTER FIVE – CONCLUSION

This plan outlines the future direction of Hardy County. This future direction is premised upon the implementation of the comprehensive set of recommendations in this plan. In order to operationalize these recommendation and the locally expressed goals, an implementation agenda must be put into action. This agenda can be achieved through various planning program components.

The impact of the plan, in the long term, will be measured by the degree to which the plan’s implementation recommendations are translated into reality. These recommendations, no matter how carefully conceived, would have little effect in guiding growth and development in the county, if they are not implemented.

The adoption of the plan serves as only one element of a continuous growth management process for Hardy County. The responsibilities for implementing the plan must be shouldered by both the public and private sector alike. The plan serves as the design framework around which relevant future land use decisions are based. Its implementation must be directed by growth management tools—zoning, subdivision and site plan ordinances, building codes, and impact fees which are fully integrated into the plan’s vision for the County. The concept of linkage between the plan and these tools has been a dominant planning theme in this effort. The recommendation portion of each section of the plan address the specific unifying linkages which will promote a successful growth management process wherein growth by design is fully achieved.

One of the most valuable lessons learned during the county’s planning process is that quality built environments and design excellence require exhaustive work by both the private sector (in defining specific market opportunities and project designs) and the public sector (ensuring project land use compatibility within the context of the Comprehensive Plan). The Comprehensive Plan, by itself, is insufficient to implement growth by design. Furthermore, it is important to note that zoning, site plan, and subdivision ordinances alone do not fully ensure that private development will be sensitively created.

The plan’s vision is ultimately defined by the many discrete public and private decisions, which address matters of location, density, scale, infrastructure, visual quality, and phasing of any particular development proposal. Accordingly, the tools and methods to be incorporated into the growth management effort must focus on each individual aspect of the land development process.