

## **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 was updated and is now being revised 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.



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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.

A subdivision ordinance was adopted in 1994 and a revised and updated subdivision ordinance that is still in effect was adopted in 2009.



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### **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:

- 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.



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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.

2014-15 REVISIONS:

When the Sirk/Ford plan was adopted in 2011 there were some concerns with certain inclusions and exclusions in the plan. The County Commission approved the plan as it was presented, but offered the Planning Commission a list of concerns and asked that these suggestions be considered with a revision process. A revision (as opposed to an update) process was started by the Hardy County Planning Office (Melissa Scott, Planner), and the Hardy County Planning Commission in 2013. It was recognized that in order to address those concerns significant changes would have to be made to the land use section. Other deficiencies were identified by the Planner and WVU Law Clinic. All of these issues have been addressed as outlined below through revision to the goals and addition of a revised Future Land Use Plan section and Future Land Use Map.

The revised Goals and Future Land Use sections not only address the County Commission's concerns but also that of the planner by making the plan's goals more attainable. The new goal charts added to each section in Chapter 2 outline clear objectives and strategies specific to Hardy County's current situation. The adopted Future Land Use Plan section recommended some sound but advanced planning concepts that are simply not feasible with the current planning organization in Hardy County. These revisions also bring the plan into compliance with the future vision for zoning changes. The changes that are envisioned for the zoning regulations are centered on the consideration of Performance Based Zoning (also called impact zoning or flexible zoning), which allows the Planning Commission to concentrate on the quality/design and impact of development as opposed to the traditional Euclidian Zoning (what we have in place now) which concentrates primarily on the placement of development. Performance Zoning can expand the range of uses that may be permitted and reduce the overall negative effects on the land and resources. Landowners and developers are provided greater flexibility on how to meet performance zoning standards.

Since these revisions were designed to specifically address concerns of the County Commission and the deficiencies identified by the current planner and WVU Land Use Law Clinic no omissions were made to the main sections of 2011 plan text except for the replacement of the Goal and Recommendation sections of Chapter 2 (and reference to



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those sections), and the replacement of the Future Land Use Plan and Map of Chapter 3. A few proposed text omissions were reviewed during public input and approved.

The changes made to the 2011 plan are outlined below:

- **Additions:**

- Before this revision process the Hardy County Planning Commission adopted a formal policy; “The Comprehensive Plan Procedures for Public Input” which states that the Planning Commission will hold at least one public meeting to gather input prior to the Public Hearing process for adoption. **(Appendix A)**
- Update of Section 1.2 (Demographic Analyses) to include new and additional background data with a more local view. The addition of the study Comprehensive Population, Economics, and Housing Analysis mentioned below also offers a significant contribution/addition to the demographic portion of the Comprehensive Plan.
- New Future Land Use Map was created using latest GIS technology/data
- New descriptions of the Land Use Categories from the land use map
- A comprehensive Population, Economics, and Housing Study was done by Cambria Planning Group in 2014. This document outlines long term trends in our community. We used the information in this document to guide the decisions made in the revisions to the 2011 plan. **(Appendix B)**
- A current land use map was created by the WVU GIS Tech Center using the land use categories as provided by the appraisal data from the Hardy County Assessor’s Office. **(Appendix C)**
- One of the primary elements missing from the plan was a section that clearly stated the goals, objectives, and strategies for each section in Chapter 2. The planner and planning commission used the new information to make better/smarter decisions about what changes needed to be made to the goals and what new objectives and strategies would speak to the issues in local terms.
- A chart for each section that outlines a simplified goal, a few objectives, and several strategies for each section – Land Use, Housing, Infrastructure, Economic Development, etc.



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- **Changes:**
  - Housing and density was identified by WVU Law Clinic as sections that were perhaps lacking information to conform with the state code, so information was added for this section.
  - The Transportation section was also identified for the lack of coordination and information. So there was significant communication between the planner and DOH to address driveway and road standards as well as design standards and future plans for upgrades.
  - The Rural Section has been renamed to the Rural/Agricultural Section and the focus of the goal is more agriculture based.
  - The Introduction and Final Implementation and Conclusion sections were revised to reflect the other changes.
- **Deletions:**
  - The clarified Goal, Objectives, and Strategies chart replaces the Goals and Recommendations for each section of Chapter 2 of the plan (Land Use, Housing, Infrastructure, Economic Development, etc.), thus the 2011 Goals and Recommendations sections for each chapter were deleted.
  - The entire “Future Land Use Plan” section and future land use map was deleted and replaced with the new Future Land Use Plan map and descriptions.
  - Some portions of the Implementation and Conclusion sections were replaced to reflect other changes.

### **Community Process**

Original version:

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



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reviewing existing documents, facilitating interviews, preparing socio-economic data and drafting the final plan.

For the revision process public outreach was completed to review all changes made to the original 2011 plan. The following outlines that public outreach:

- Held 4 informal informational and open discussion meetings around the county
  - Oct. 28 – Peru Community Center
  - Nov 3<sup>rd</sup> – Baker Ambulance Building
  - Nov 9<sup>th</sup> – Wardensville War Memorial
  - Dec 1<sup>st</sup> – Moorefield – South Branch Inn
- Those meetings were advertised:
  - On the County website
  - On the radio
  - On signs outside the meeting venues
  - Via mass e-mail
  - Through meeting ads in the paper
  - On posters around the courthouse and other gov. offices
- There were at least 2 full articles in the Moorefield Examiner about the process, purpose, and progress
- There was/is a website for document download with link from county website:  
<http://hardyplanningwv.my-free.website/>
- Planning Dept. encouraged and maintained open office/e-mail policy for discussions via phone @ 304-530-0257 and via e-mail mscott.hardyplanner@gmail.com
- Advertised Comp Plan discussion time on every agenda for every regularly scheduled monthly Planning Commission meeting for AT LEAST the last 18 months.

The Planning Commission also held an advertised Special Meeting on January 20<sup>th</sup> to consider additional input that was collected in January after more informational presentations were held at various county board meetings.

Finally, The Planning Commission held the Public Hearing on March 15<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 p.m. There was no additional public input submitted verbally or on paper. At the April 5<sup>th</sup>, regular meeting The Planning Commission voted to recommend the same version of the plan to the County Commission.

One of the recommendations in the original plan was to divide the county into planning sectors. The meetings listed above were done in each sector in order to collect information



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from regions that seem to share a vision for their local community; the goal is to design the planning efforts of each region to match that of the specific area.

The purpose of these meetings were to take comments about potential changes to the revisions. The Planning Sectors boundaries are based on watersheds which align with original settlement patterns so the cultures and views of these areas are still reflected today. Those boundaries are as shown:



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## SECTION 1.2 – DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS

2014:

See **Appendix B** for a significant addition to the population, Economics, and Housing information.

### 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 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.

2014 Addition:

According to the 2010 Census, the median age in Hardy County is 42.8 yrs., while the national median age is 37. This significant difference illustrates the most relevant population issue in Hardy County; the growing 55+ population. According to the 2010 Census, 31% of the population of Hardy County is 55 (yrs. of age) or over. Naturally, the aging baby boomers are a contributor to this number, but more interestingly in Hardy County the population of retirement age is higher than the younger age groups in the prior census. This, along with a comparison of nativity (place of birth) rates shows that people are moving to Hardy County in the 55+ age group who did not previously live here.

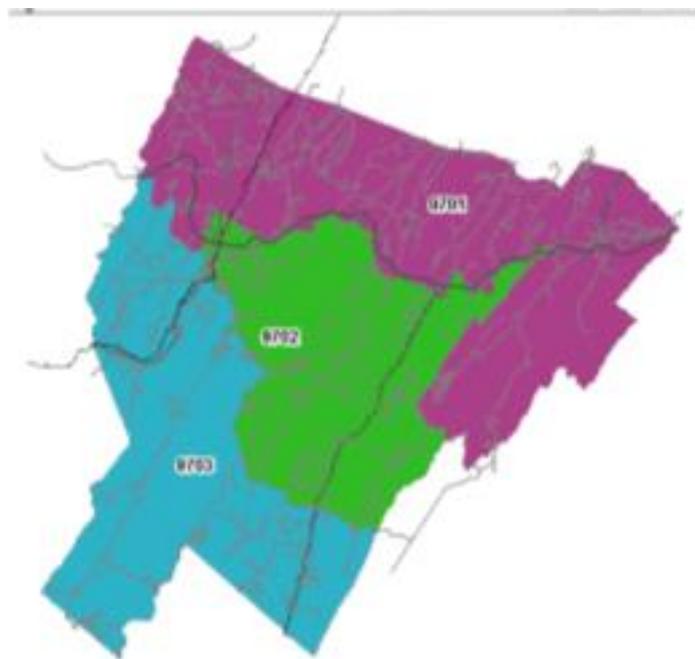


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Another population issue that is relevant to Hardy County that is not reflected in the population data from the Census Bureau is the number of immigrants living in the area working in the poultry industry. Estimates from local community service sources place the number of immigrants at 700+ split primarily between a large Latino population, Burmese and Ethiopian political refugees, and South American immigrants.

Population density is as shown below by census tract and a very detailed analysis can be found on page 35 of the attached Population Economics and Housing Study (Appendix B)- that analysis is done by US. Census Bureau Subdivisions:



Geographic area	Population	Housing units	Area in square miles			Density per square mile of land area	
			Total area	Water area	Land area	Population	Housing units
Hardy County	14,025	5,078	584.48	2.17	582.31	24.1	13.9
Census Tract 9701	4,820	2,954	241.84	0.79	241.05	20.0	12.3
Census Tract 9702	5,110	2,980	153.53	0.36	153.17	33.4	19.5
Census Tract 9703	4,095	2,144	189.12	1.02	188.09	21.8	11.4

As the study states, the bottom line is that our low scattered density is costly to our residents due to the delivery service areas of infrastructure and services such as emergency and police. In the future we want to encourage populations to cluster in order to preserve land and natural resources as well as fiscal resources and provide a better quality of life for all residents.



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### 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.

2014:

According to the WV Department of Education, Hardy County Schools serve approximately 2300 students. In 2012-13 Hardy County appeared in the top 10 counties with the lowest truancy rates in the state, but is around the state mid-point in dropout rates at 1.2%. In 2012-13 the average reading proficiency of all schools/all grades in West Virginia was around 47% and the average math proficiency in the state was 45%. Among all schools/all grades in Hardy County the reading proficiency average was 45%. The average math proficiency for all schools/all grades is also 45% when the proficiency rate for East Hardy High School is excluded. East Hardy boasts one of the highest math proficiency rates in the state at 76.9%.

The West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission reported that in 2011 Hardy County had one of the state's highest college attendance rates by graduating seniors at 69.2%.

As for physical infrastructure of educational facilities in Hardy County, both the Moorefield High School and East Hardy High have enjoyed expansion/renovations in 2014-15, and Eastern WV Community College (opened 2010) has just opened an expansion of their facility.



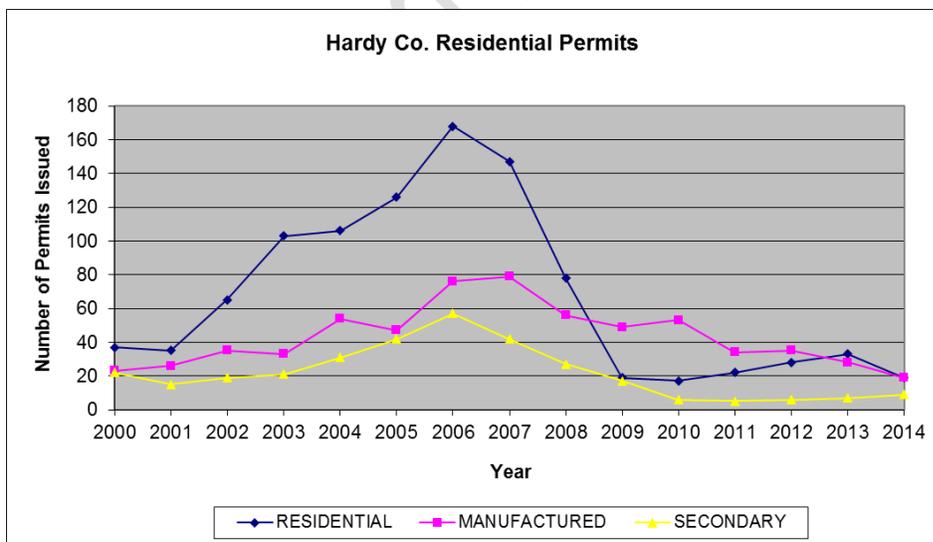
### Housing

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.

2014:

The most recent 911 address data from 2014 reports that there are approximately 8500 residential structures in Hardy County. The Hardy County building permit data shows nearly 350 residential constructions since 2009 so the two numbers from 2009 USCB and our 2014 local residential data seem to be fairly consistent. Unfortunately, the census numbers show that 41% of the housing units in Hardy County are vacant and manufactured homes outnumber “stick built” home significantly, possibly highlighting the lack of affordable housing in our county.



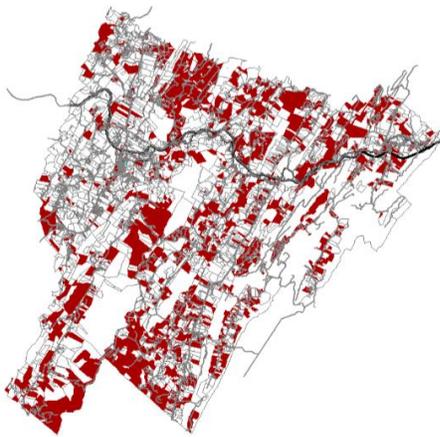


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According to the USCB 2008-2012 ACS Housing data almost a quarter of the county population rent their homes as opposed to own. In Moorefield however the number of renters is closer to half. 56% of renters in Hardy County spend more than 25% of their household income for rent.

The fact that approximately 30% of the parcels in the county are owned by out of state residents illustrates the fact that Hardy County is becoming a prime location for second homes. About half of those parcels have building construction, and the other half are vacant. The red reflects parcels owned by out of state owners.



### 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.

2014:

The 2013 census estimates showed there were 5818 households in Hardy County and the median household income had decreased slightly to \$32,723. These estimates also showed that the number of persons living below the poverty level also increased at 15.7%.



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**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.

2014:

According to the latest 2015 numbers, the highest unemployment rate in Hardy County was in February at 9.5%. By June it was back down to the state rate of 7.2% but rose again in July to 8.3%.

The most recent 2013 Census numbers estimate 253 establishments in Hardy County broken down by the following industry and number of employees:

Meaning of 2012 NAICS code	Year	Number of establishments	Paid employees for pay period including March 12 (number)
Total for all sectors	2013	253	4,686
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	2013	2	0-19
Construction	2013	24	20-9
Manufacturing	2013	10	2,593
Wholesale trade	2013	6	20-9
Retail trade	2013	43	589
Transportation and warehousing	2013	11	100-249
Information	2013	6	72
Finance and insurance	2013	21	197
Real estate and rental and leasing	2013	7	0-19
Professional, scientific, and technical services	2013	16	49
Management of companies and enterprises	2013	1	0-19



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Administrative and support and waste management and remediation services	2013	9	20-9
Educational services	2013	2	0-19
Health care and social assistance	2013	33	412
Arts, entertainment, and recreation	2013	4	0-19
Accommodation and food services	2013	29	322
Other services (except public administration)	2013	29	144

### 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.

2014:

Reporting methodology changed from 2002 to 2007 but comparably, non-employer value of sales, shipments, receipts, revenue, or business done in 2007 was \$640,000 and in 2012 it dropped to \$255,000 after losing 2 manufacturing businesses. Transportation and warehousing was the top revenue producer in 2012 at \$3,562,000, next was real estate/rental at \$2,796,000.

### 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



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their products was \$146,113,000. Hardy County ranked 8<sup>th</sup> 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.

2014: As a comparison, the **2012** Census of Agriculture reported that (a) total value of agricultural products sold was \$188,970,000 and the (b) value of livestock, poultry, and their products was \$183,806,000. Hardy County ranked 8<sup>th</sup> in the state in terms of crops (including nursery and greenhouse) with a total value of \$5,164,000. The 2012 Census of Agriculture reports that the average per farm reporting sales was \$382,531.

### 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 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.

2014: The 2012 Census of Agriculture shows a decline in farms to 494 farms, but the acreage increased to a total acreage of 155,316. This of course reflects an increase in farm size of +16% change.

### Poultry

Hardy County is appropriately known as the "Poultry Capital" of West Virginia. According to the 2007 Census of Agriculture, Hardy County ranked 1<sup>st</sup> 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.

2014:

The 2012 Agricultural Census reports that Hardy County ranks first in the state for the general category of "poultry and eggs" and more specifically broilers, pullets, layers, and roosters. Hardy fell into second place behind Pendleton County for production of turkeys.



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Pilgrims, the primary poultry industry in Hardy County currently reports that they employ 1,227 workers, in their fresh food division and 700 in their prepared food division. They have 226 growers, and 600 houses in Hardy County. They report that growers payments total nearly \$25,000,000 per year and they have a payroll total in Moorefield of \$57,500,000. The “fresh plant” in Moorefield processes 450,000 birds per day (2.2 million birds per week) and sells to major customers like KFC, Boston Market, Sysco, Popeyes, Safeway, Wal-Mart, and Food Lion. On the hatchery end they produce 2,099,520 eggs per week. Their feed mill capacity is 8,400 tons per week.

### **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 2<sup>nd</sup> in the state for hogs and pigs; 4<sup>th</sup> for cattle and calves; 8<sup>th</sup> for sheep, goats, and their products; 14<sup>th</sup> for aquaculture; 21<sup>st</sup> for horses, ponies, mules, burros, and donkeys; and 23<sup>rd</sup> for milk and other dairy products from cows.

2014: In the 2012 Census of Agriculture the state rankings for Hardy County had changed slightly ranking 3<sup>rd</sup> for cattle, 4<sup>th</sup> for hogs and pigs, 14<sup>th</sup> for sheep/goats and products and 15 for aquaculture.

### **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 3<sup>rd</sup> in the state for (a) corn for grain; (b) corn for silage; (c) soybeans for beans; and (d) barley for grain. The county ranked 15<sup>th</sup> for forage (land used for all hay and haylage, grass silage, and green chop).

2014: The local current land use data shows that about 1% of the total land is dedicated to crops and 4.5% to pasture/hay. Only about 7.5% of our total land mass consists of prime agricultural soils which can be of concern to a farm community when looking at sustainability. Most of those prime soils are also along the major transportation routes of US Route 220 and State Route 259. From a planning standpoint the importance of protection of these areas is significant.



### **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**

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.

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



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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.

2014:

The addition of a detailed current land use map can be found in Appendix C. This map shows details of land use such as the lots in subdivisions that do not currently have residential structures, this highlights the large quantity of already subdivided residential “stock” that exists in Hardy County.

### **SWOT ANALYSIS**

The equivalent of a SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) was conducted as part of this 2011 plan. The following information was used in the formulation of this section of the plan.

#### **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
- 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

GOAL - LAND USE	The land use goal for Hardy County is to promote logical, efficient, and well-organized sustainable land use patterns that protect natural and historic resources along with the current agricultural based lifestyle while supporting economic growth and improving the quality of life for our community as stated in the goals listed in each section of this plan.			
Objectives	Strategies	Planning Explanation/Justification	Priority	
Concentrate commercial/industrial development in growth areas along transportation corridors where sufficient utilities are available, where there is limited ecological risk, and where design does not promote (linear) inefficient sprawl but rather preserves agricultural areas and open space areas.	Use new data to analyze areas where development is appropriate and change zoning to reflect revised Future Land Use Map and revised Comprehensive Plan.	The zoning map should align with the goals of the new future land use map. New and detailed data has been collected and mapped showing the existing conditions, and limitations and the future land use map has been updated significantly. That data should be used going forward with zoning changes to comply with overall planning requirements.	1	
Encourage revitalization/reuse of existing commercial/industrial structures, and better site planning for commercial and industrial areas.	Add sections to the Subdivision Ordinance that addresses commercial and industrial subdivisions in addition to residential. Foster relationship with owners of areas in need of revitalization/reuse, promote better re-use of such vacant/available properties and create a process to identify and assist with re-use of such properties.	Currently there are no policies concerning subdivision regulations for commercial or industrial land. Regulations intended for residential subdivision are not applicable. - As for revitalization, there is no formal local process to identify or assist owners of properties in need of revitalization.	5	
Address conflicting land use.	Create logically sound buffer policies in ordinances and other flexible policies that support limited adverse impact from commercial/industrial development.	There are current incidences of conflicting land use where commercial/industrial development is impacting citizens on an ongoing basis and the county lacks tools to mitigate this or protect future developments from similar impacts.	4	
Support regulations that encourage more diverse residential development that fits the needs of the population and addresses lot size more clearly	Revise ordinances to encourage flexible and diverse residential communities using tools such as Planned Unit Developments (PUD), and different commercial options for small businesses such as farmers' markets. Provide design guidelines to developers, using incentives when possible. Set clear lot size standard for zoning classifications. Add sections to the Subdivision ordinance to address commercial and industrial divisions.	Euclidian zoning - the traditional pre-assignment of area for particular land use is not necessarily the most efficient zoning for a rural area. More flexible zoning that concentrates on mitigating impacts of development rather than placement may be more applicable to our area. This is called performance based zoning.	8	
Revise policies to allow for flexible commercial and residential development in rural areas that supports more efficient and sustainable agricultural/rural lifestyle		With more concentration on the impacts or performance of development there will be a need for clear guidelines of what attributes our county wants to see in developments instead of focusing on broad categories of things we don't want. Design guidelines will outline those attributes.	2	
Support policies to protect agriculture, forests, water resources, sensitive areas such as floodplain and steep hillside and historic properties.	Create overlay boundaries to identify areas that may be considered for additional protection (floodplain, historic preservation, prime soils etc.) and revitalization, and share this information with decision makers all over the county.	When making decisions about land use, it is helpful to see all of the issues affecting a property. Mapping overlays can show useful information for decision making such as the location of prime farm soils, limited septic soils, steep slopes, or proximity to things like water sources.	3	
Educate citizens and use feedback to establish policies relevant to county's needs.	Use sector planning (see map) to allow citizens to focus their input on decisions that are of special interest to their region. Publish educational planning articles in local publications.	The citizens that live and own land in a particular area should have the opportunity to influence land use policies in that area to a greater degree than those who do not have a direct connection to the area. Dividing the county into sectors and asking for input from each area, for each area will give land owners more of a voice in the planning policy in their home area of interest.	9	
Clean up vague or obsolete areas in zoning ordinance.	As a first step, Clean up vague or obsolete text areas in the zoning ordinance that can cause conflicts - text amendments. As a second step start work on a new ordinance that complies with the comp plan and considers other zoning ordinance formats such as performance zoning that focuses on minimizing the impacts while allowing flexibility of specific uses. Also utilize optional zoning provisions (as outlined in state code §8A-7-2(b)) that we are not currently utilizing.	There are currently some verbiage and punctuation errors in the zoning ordinance that open the doors to interpretation contrary to the intended meaning. A new zoning ordinance needs to be drafted to add a component of flexibility as discussed previously - focusing more on the "how" of development instead of only on the "where" - performance based zoning as opposed to traditional Euclidian.	7	
Encourage communication between the County Planning Office, other authorities such as RDA & PSD and other county boards including Parks & Rec., Wastewater Authority, Farmland Protection, etc., and elected or appointed officials as a means to plan and manage growth.	Establish working relationship with towns and utility providers to identify growth areas. Planning staff will regularly attend meetings of other entities such as RDA, Region 8, DOH, etc. in order to maintain good working relationships.	As funding sources turn toward favoring regional cooperation as a means of preventing redundant or even opposing policies in an area, a clear and positive working relationship needs to be established between all levels of agencies to ensure consistent policy and partnerships.	6	



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## 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.

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.

2014:

The addition of the new demographic information and study highlights the need for housing for seniors (some with significant disposable income) and low-medium wage workers. Our high retirement age population does not meet the growth rate for housing suitable for that age group. We can also note the large numbers of people who commute to Hardy County to work, yet live, and shop in their home (adjacent) counties. If we could provide affordable housing that appeals to these groups we could possibly attract a contributing population to our county and tax base. According to our building permit numbers, our new builds tend to be mobile homes or second homes.

The need for housing (benefits) should be balanced with the cost (fiscally and ecological). New land use and zoning regulations and policies need to be more flexible in terms of location and more focused on performance or quality. A thorough analysis can be found on pages 34-43 of the attached Appendix B. The density issues are address in the land use section and generally support the philosophy of keeping highest density housing to areas in the preferred development areas (areas with infrastructure). Medium density or high density (clustered) housing can be appropriate in most any area if the social and ecological impacts are addressed. Low density housing best fits the rural/ag lifestyle and land use descriptions.



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### **SWOT ANALYSIS**

The equivalent of a SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) was conducted as part of this 2011 plan. The following information was used in the formulation of this section of the plan.

#### **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

GOAL - HOUSING	The housing goal for Hardy County is to strengthen the existing housing stock and identify areas well suited for a variety of different types of future housing developments, all while ensuring attractive and sound design and construction that meets the needs of the Hardy County population.			
Objectives	Strategies	Planning Explanation/Justification	Priority	
Work to diversify and improve housing choices and standards & design, most urgently address the shortage of medium priced housing, rentals and senior living opportunities.	Utilize regulations such as the affordable housing density model recommended by American Planning Association to incent developers to construct housing in various price ranges.	Deciding exactly what we want and need in our community and then clearly communicating that to developers (in other words asking for what we want), is not a hindrance to development but rather a help. Developers like to know that they have the support of the community when embarking on a project, and if a community is clear about the goals, the community seems more stable and their investment more sound.	2	
	Revise the zoning ordinance to allow for flexible and mixed use developments after approvals from the Planning Commission (PUD or Planned Unit Developments or floating zoning), but encourage high density residential into proffered growth areas.	Planned Use Developments and/or floating zoning focuses more on the performance or impact of development (quality) of development more than the location of development. Developments can be proposed anywhere in the county as long as they meet design, and functionality requirements and do not negatively impact the community. Developers can also be incentivized to add senior or lower priced sections to developments.	3	
Try to attract or encourage developers to construct housing that meets the needs of our population through education and or incentives, but not discouraging new homes that would increase the County's tax base.	Reach out to potential developers and develop working relationships and information exchange. Provide density bonuses, fee reductions, or other incentives to housing developments for the inclusion of amenities and improved public facilities, such as roads and recreational features and/or housing sections for varied populations.	If we choose to increase the flexibility of our zoning ordinance and incorporate process like PUDs into our regulations we can be more creative and actually form a working relationship with developers that enables us to negotiate with them so everyone gets what they want and need.	1	
Consider regulations that preserve or improve the existing housing stock and ensure the longevity and financing of future development	Adopt regulations such as the state building code that support sound construction, property maintenance codes, and/or processes that require and track appropriate license for contractors, and monitors rental conditions and occupancy	Banks are very reluctant to lend money for homes that do not have an occupancy permit - especially spec. homes. Occupancy permits can only be issued on structures that have gone through the state building code inspection administered by the process during the various steps of construction.	7	
Consider the housing needs of our native population and working poor, while considering what is appropriate for our landscape and culture.	Develop design guidelines and standards for residential subdivisions and PUD processes that encourage attractive and sustainable development and meet the requirements of other agency regulations	The Planning Commission will have to develop the PUD process in a way that encourages the desired characteristics, protects the areas resources, mitigates impacts, and allows for public input into the decisions. The process also needs to be clear and easy for developers to follow while still allowing for flexibility.	6	
	Develop guidelines and standards for manufactured homes and manufactured home parks that coincide with §37-15 and other land use regulations.	The mobile home park regulations need to be incorporated into the subdivision/zoning/permitting processes and the provisions need to be updated to correspond with the existing regulations.	5	
Change zoning boundaries to more closely match reality of existing land use in order to regulate more efficiently and consistently	Use Zoning regulations to protect current residential areas from incompatible land use being located adjacent to housing, and designate areas appropriate for different types of future residential development.	Currently many of the existing residential subdivisions on record in the county clerk's office are not zoned residential. The zoning for those residential subdivisions needs to be changed in order for the residential regulations to be applicable. For instance, smaller setbacks, or home based businesses regulations in Residential Zones would not apply in a subdivision zoned Ag because of the zoning. Also, any uses in those existing subdivision that do not meet residential zoning should be officially grandfathered at that time - such as Ag zoned subdivisions that allow single-wide mobile homes. Also, some subdivisions that are not zoned Ag. are susceptible to industry locating in close proximity because they do not get the benefits/protections of the residential zoning category.	4	



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## 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.

2014:

Several meetings have been held with DOH and DOT concerning the planning procedures as related to transportation and future transportation goals. Although the county planning commission has very little to do with transportation improvements directly, we can coordinate our goals with those of these two agencies and with the towns. The DOH has agreed to coordinate with the County planning efforts in developing design standards that take into account the regulations from DOH for driveway, commercial entrances, stormwater runoff, and design. The County Planner will attend quarterly meetings with



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DOH officials and local planners from the Region 5 office to discuss transportation issues. Multimodal issues have been addressed in the goals for this section and in conversations with other local boards and town planning commissions.

### **SWOT ANALYSIS**

The equivalent of a SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) was conducted as part of this 2011 plan. The following information was used in the formulation of this section of the plan.

#### **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.



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- 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.

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<b>GOAL - TRANSPORTATION</b>	The transportation goal for Hardy County is to identify transportation issues, considering all modes of transportation, and address those issues by cooperating with other local and state entities to support, plan and implement programs that ensure a safe and efficient transportation and circulation system that supports our development goals.			
<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Strategies</b>	<b>Planning Explanation/Justification</b>	<b>Priority</b>	
The county should coordinate with DOH to support policies and goals.	The county will continue to support DOH by requiring entrance permits prior to building permits, especially with commercial development. Develop design guidelines for development areas along corridors that support and enhance the practices already in place by DOH such as reducing/preventing multiple access points on roadways that cause traffic congestion and unsafe entry/exit from driveways.	The DOH and DOT are ultimately responsible for the bulk of the transportation issues affecting Hardy County. Our cooperation and working relationship with that entity is directly related to our involvement in their processes. Through recent communication, we have discovered that many of our policies are working toward similar goals. We need to continue and develop that relationship and work together to support each other whenever possible.	2	
Support policies that will promote well designed growth that does not overburden the existing road capacities.	Review and revise the ordinances to increase the level of information required with applications to consider the traffic impacts of certain types of developments. Communicate with DOH on larger applications by sharing the actual application forms to ensure the applicants are providing consistent information to both entities. Develop and provide design guidelines to applicants that coincide with DOH policies.	Currently we do not have sufficient policy to look at traffic impacts from development. We rely on DOH to consider traffic impacts even though there is not an official policy to share the details of development applications and entrance permit applications.	5	
Create sound policies that consider the impacts that land use has on transportation issues.	Develop guidelines that will allow Planning Commissioners to be consistent and thorough in their assessment of traffic impacts when reviewing development plans and create provision in ordinances for applicants of large projects to pay for engineering review of transportation/road detail plans. Provide DOH with maps showing the future land use development plans and get upgrade plans from DOH/DOT as early as possible to see how they coincide with our plans.	The DOH holds quarterly meetings with the counties of the eastern panhandle to share information about upcoming or current projects; we need to attend those meetings regularly, especially when there are active projects that need discussion.	1	
Promote multi-modal transportation policies.	Work with the DOH and possibly the Potomac Valley Transit Authority to develop formal park and ride lots with an online find a ride system that coordinates with Transit schedules. Support projects that encourage a more walkable/bike-able community for accessibility to services and promotion of good health.	Multi-modal transportation is becoming more and more important to the quality of life of residents. In areas adjacent to urban we want to encourage people to use cars less and use other modes of transportation more; this is directly tied to health of communities and residents.	4	
Support long term and regional transportation planning.	Coordinate with other communities along Corridor H to create a long term plan for growth along this important corridor.	Hardy County is not the only area that is being changed by the construction of Corridor H. We need to communicate with and coordinate with our neighboring localities to evaluate the larger overall impacts and needs that come with this highway. This will help prevent conflicts in projects, reduce redundancy, increase the efficiency of planning and spending and open up grant funding opportunities.	6	
	Coordinate with towns and other entities when transportation grant money is being utilized and try to piggyback or enhance projects.	Many of the grants available give preference to projects where multiple agencies and jurisdictions are in formal cooperation and have policies with shared goals. The county alone has limited opportunities	3	



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## 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.

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.



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- 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.

### **SWOT ANALYSIS**

The equivalent of a SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) was conducted as part of this 2011 plan. The following information was used in the formulation of this section of the plan.

#### **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



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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 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.

<b>GOAL - INFRASTRUCTURE</b>	The goal of the infrastructure section of the Hardy County Comprehensive Plan is to support and implement programs that ensure high quality facilities and services will be placed in areas that meet the present and future needs of the county, are maintained properly, and do not promote development patterns contrary to the land use, or public safety goals of Hardy County.			
<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Strategies</b>	<b>Planning Explanation/Justification</b>	<b>Priority</b>	
The county should coordinate with other local, state, federal and private entities to ensure two way communication and data exchange in order to promote efficient growth patterns, and support the development and maintenance of infrastructure.	Facilitate and coordinate communication between the County Planning efforts and the Regional Sewer Authority, PSD, Towns, Region 8 PDS, RDA, and private entities to ensure efficient planning for size and location of new facilities or expansions are in line with the planned expansions of zoning, subdivisions and other developments.	Efficient planning requires communication. It is much more efficient to be proactive than reactive in infrastructure development. Coordinating infrastructure with land use planning is a core component of planning. Development trends can be tracked and shown with local planning data and should be utilized when making decisions about public services.	1	
Coordinate with other agencies to formulate goals that work for everyone and work to design our policies to support those agencies' goals.	The county will continue to support DOH by requiring entrance permits prior to building permits, especially with commercial development. Continue to require septic approvals from the Hardy County Health Department prior to the issuance of a building permits and increase the communication and use of technology to track these processes. Integrate storm water regulations into ordinances as needed, and continue to provide 911 and the assessors office with building permit information for the assignment of addresses and appraisal of property for taxes.	Efficiency is again the goal of coordination. The planning office should serve as the hub for information for multiple processes. We need to continue our efforts of coordination, expand those when/where we can and provide other entities with the many layer of information that we gather locally.	5	
Provide tangible support to grants and projects that are in line with the goals of this plan.	Support the expansion of public sewer with public water as development often follows public water lines. Encourage efficient infrastructure improvements in the preferred growth areas identified in this plan on the future land use map.	One of the fundamental rules of planning is to always recognize that where public water goes, development will follow. We need to be mindful of this and the implications of not following the waterlines with public sewer. Septic is one of the top polluters of ground water in the US. About 1/3 of Hardy Co. soils are limited for septic suitability; we need to guide development responsibly and keep areas of public water to a manageable area in order to follow with public sewer.	4	
Do educational outreach about impacts of inefficient infrastructure development and provide local data to promote better decision making.	Promote the use of advanced data (GIS) to allow local decision makers to look at a whole picture view when making infrastructure decisions. Educate agencies and decision makers about the many layers of information available through the planning office's GIS system. Take every PR opportunity available to promote the benefits of planning and information exchange.	Again, the planning office should serve as the hub of information as MANY processes come together in this office. We have collected and continue to collect massive amounts of data - much of which is collected locally and does not exist anywhere else. We need to promote open data policy and share information to decision makers AND to citizens to help them make more informed decisions.	3	
Change subdivision and zoning regulations to provide decisions makers with the tools to regulate and verify that plans and as-built infrastructure are sufficient to prevent ecological or safety concerns	Strengthen zoning and subdivision regulations to require sewerage systems other than individual septic with the proposal of higher density subdivisions, especially when in areas with limited or spotty septic capability or areas near water sources. Tighten subdivision regulations to require applicant to pay for engineering review and site inspection on major subdivision plans. Seek funding avenues for and support an updated water resource study.	The more regulations we enact the more diligent we need to be that we are making good decisions that are backed by science and professional certification. Engineering review on more advanced projects protects the county as well as the applicants and future owners.	2	
Coordinate federal and state policies concerning our infrastructure including levees, dams, etc., and consider those in our regulations.	Review all regulations as we revise our ordinances and be in contact with these agencies about how these regulations affect the locals under their jurisdiction. Try to coordinate the requirements we as locals are trying to meet from FEMA, NRCS, USACE, EPA and DEP and DNR and educate these entities of conflicting policies.	There are existing federal policies that are currently conflicting and even contradictory. Involvement in state and federal associations such as Floodplain Managers Association gives the opportunity to change policies and add a local voice to enforcement.	6	
	Provide support to the town of Moorefield as they seek to gain and maintain certification of the levee system.	Once again, the local planning office is the only place that deals with all of the organizations. It seems that it falls on our shoulders to try to coordinate the regulations we are required to follow and educate	7	



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## **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.
- Protect agricultural uses such as stock and livestock; while providing essential support services.



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- 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.

### **SWOT ANALYSIS**

The equivalent of a SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) was conducted as part of this 2011 plan. The following information was used in the formulation of this section of the plan.

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

GOAL - PUBLIC SERVICES	Facilitate open communication between public and private entities to identify civic/public service needs and support policies that ensure effective and efficient delivery of services to meet those needs (current and future), regardless of age, ability, or affiliation.			
Objectives	Strategies	Planning Justification	Priority	
<p>Work with the citizens, citizen groups, and government entities through out the county to realize true community planning which is to set minimal standards for smart decisions in development, monitor the interconnectedness of projects going on in the community, and coordinate the involved entities to enhance the efficiency and quality of such projects in a way that will benefit the most people with the fewest resources.</p>	<p>Attempt to develop relationships with entities that will enable this office to perform true community planning by tracking, coordinating, and enhancing efforts in this community associated with the elements of (as required by state code), Housing, Transportation, Infrastructure, Public Service, Recreation &amp; Tourism, Economic Development, Re-development &amp; Revitalization, and Histic Preservation as they relate to each other and to the primary planning role - to facilitate land use, community design and the direction of growth &amp; development in a way that meets the needs of the citizens of Hardy County and preserves the resources important to them.</p>	<p>A fundamental function of planning that no other government entity undertakes is to act as an informational hub that collects MANY types of information directly from the citizens &amp; developers and decimates pieces of that information back to local, state, and federal agencies in order to keep the governmental machine running in a way that benefits the overall community to which it serves. When local agencies do not communicate, cogs are missing and the wheel doesn't move as efficiently as it should; poor decisions are made in a vacume and resources are wasted.</p>	1	
<p>Take specific measures to coordinate data and information sharing efforts among county entities to improve efficiency and eliminate redundancy.</p>	<p>Create a GIS board that will contain representatives from all departments that use GIS, so information and resources can be shared and important decisions can be made as a group to benefit all departments. Continue to add layers to the GIS website so all government entities and private citizens can access the various local, state, and federal information when making decisions.</p>	<p>Information is power, this is why many entities do not want to share, but precisely why it is important. By sharing information the power is distributed equally (including among the citizens) and smart open decisions are made that benefit the many instead of the few.</p>	3	
	<p>Offer ongoing assistance (beyond the public GIS information) to the school board, emergency services, transit authority, RDA and other community organizations in the form of socioeconomic, infrastructure, and land information and analysis that will help them make more informed decisions when locating project. The planning office should show public support for decisions amd projects that consider and conform to the goals of the Comprehensive Plan.</p>	<p>The point of a Comprehensive Plan is to show that the community and its entities have given significant consideration to the long term goals for the community, have chosen to collaboratively support priorities that are important for the community, and are attempting to share information and coordinate efforts in order to promote efficiency. All government entities are then supposed to abide by the goals set forth in the Comprehensive Plan.</p>	5	
<p>Educate the public on planning processes and continue to find ways to open paths of two way communication between the public and government.</p>	<p>Take advantage of oportunities for publications (articles), public meetings and trainings that reach out to the commnuty to ask their opinions, teach them about the government processes and how to access information and services available to them, and how to voice their concerns and express their needs to the appropriate governmetn entities.</p>	<p>The true purpose of planning is to help communities to work smarter not harder to get what they need . Coordination and comunication between entities and citizens is key to this. Community planning offices are the bridge between the private entities (as they have direct contact with the public) and the government processes and can act as a mediator between the two to maintain an equilibrium of power and establish a trusting relationship.</p>	4	
<p>Facilitate open government processes.</p>	<p>Make efforts to enhance and/or keep website information up to date, create social media outlets that offers a format for public feedback on planning issues. Continue to enhance online data access to information and processes such as permit application. Partner with other organizations to develop a community calendar that reports happenings of all organizations including local meetings, traninings, etc. The planning office will continue to make time to talk one on one with citizens and help them directly with problems, applications and processes.</p>	<p>It can not be overstated how important two way communication is to the relationship between government and its citizens and between governmental agencies. Good relationships are the key to good governance and without it communities are often paralyzed by infighting and stale mates.</p>	2	



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## SECTION 2.6 – RURAL/AGRICULTURAL

### 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 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 ~~air~~ 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 ~~air~~ spraying; and movement of livestock and machinery on public roads. These perceived inconveniences are aspects of life in agrarian communities.



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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.

### **SWOT ANALYSIS**

The equivalent of a SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) was conducted as part of this 2011 plan. The following information was used in the formulation of this section of the plan.

#### **Assets and Opportunities**

- Long-standing agricultural economy.
- Views 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.



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**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.

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GOAL - RURAL/AG	Identify key issues and support policies that ensure that a balance of productive agricultural and rural land in Hardy County is maintained and protected in all current and future development decisions; this for both the economic and cultural good of the County.		
Objectives	Strategies	Planning Justification	Priority
Work with higher level state and Federal agencies to promote the importance of agriculture in our overall economy.	Work with State Floodplain Coordinator to incorporate common sense standards for floodplain design requirements specific to farm structures. Continue to work with NRCS to share standards and procedures for placement of farm structures in or near the floodplain. Promote the reality that agriculture has huge economic impact (contribution) in our region of WV, and advocate for the inclusion of this industry into the economic studies, documents, and plans created for WV.	The local level planning offices coordinate with all other government entities that often do not communicate with one another. This allows us to see the conflicting policies of the state and federal agencies. This puts the locals in a difficult position of choosing which higher level entity to comply with, as we are required to comply with all, but also gives us the opportunity to point out those inconsistencies to higher level agencies.	5
Work to promote the goals of the WV Department of Agriculture through local planning policies and regulations.	Through our direct interaction with the public we can serve as a secondary location to disseminate various information about agriculture issues whether it be the various requirements and standards of poultry house construction, or the precautions to be taken with backyard farming practices. Our agencies can work together to coordinate our goals as they promote Hardy County as an agricultural community.		6
Develop long term goals and policies that gives sufficient weight to the importance of agriculture in our area.	Work with farm related agencies and farmland protection board to develop a formal farm plan. Continue to promote the fact that we exercise the Right to Farm as outlined in the WV State Code (currently on the building permit).	Agriculture is very important to our region, but not so important in the grand scheme of things in WV as the natural resource extraction industries guide policies. Those state policies sometimes not only ignore the priorities of our region, but may even work against our goals to maintain our productive agricultural economy.	4
Revise regulations to address modern day agriculture issues.	Revise the zoning ordinance to a model that is more flexible (perhaps performance based) yet still designate levels of agriculture recognizing the most valuable prime and statewide significant soils where encroachment of non-agricultural uses should be minimized. - Create provisions for "back yard" agriculture and non-traditional agriculture practices in the zoning ordinance, these uses are currently not addressed, thus not permitted. - Revise ordinance regulations to allow for flexibility of ancillary farm uses on Agricultural properties (such as farm markets, agritourist etc.). Work with the farmland protection board, support their goals and provide information like the location of proposed development or infrastructure to help them determine an efficient local policy for farmland protection prioritization.	Our current zoning ordinance focuses on restricting specific uses in specific locations. That rather antiquated form of zoning (Euclidian) discourages innovative land uses as there is no way the list of exclusions could include all of the possibilities. The newer performance based zoning model allows for common sense decisions to be made about individual proposals based on the impacts such development may have on the community.	3
Support policies that preserve the natural resources, rural qualities, and farm heritage aspects of the county.	Incorporate policies to protect the basic natural resources that are necessary for a successful and diverse agriculture industry such as fertile soils and clean water. Draft design guidelines for developers with simple alternatives to project design that would enable man made structures to meld into our landscapes as to not distort our rural character, promote efficient use of land, and protect water quality. Again, the creation of an Ag. Plan could reinforce our commitment to agriculture and rural culture.	Although promotion of agriculture and protection of the environment are often at odds with one another due to extreme actions of regulatory agencies , the hard core facts are that without clean water, soil, and air, agriculture is not sustainable. We need to focus on the old values of farmers which is to be stewards of their land and livelihood, and develop our own policies that support common sense preservation of our resources. In turn those proactive policies and actions (if successful) will hopefully be recognized, appreciated and perhaps replicated by the higher level agencies.	2
Work to promote planning policies that support economic development opportunities for new farmers and discourage conversion from farm use to non-farm land use.	In addition to revising the zoning as listed above, revise subdivision regulations to incent mergers that increase farmland, and discourage subdivision of prime productive agricultural land. Support policies that encourage young/new agriculture operations. Recognize the difference between traditional economic development and rural/ag friendly economic development giving additional support to the ag related business that support the rural culture the citizens have asked us to preserve. Work with entities who are directly supporting agricultural entrepreneurship to ensure ease of permitting etc	There is a difference in Traditional Economic Development and Rural Development priorities. Looking at the model of different states where Rural Development Entities focus on rural/ag issues and work in conjunction with Traditional Economic Development Entities may offer some insight.	1



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## SECTION 2.7 – RECREATION

### 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.



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- 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 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



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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
- 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.

### **SWOT ANALYSIS**

The equivalent of a SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) was conducted as part of this 2011 plan. The following information was used in the formulation of this section of the plan.



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### **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.
- 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.

<b>GOAL - Recreation</b>	Promote the importance of open public space for recreational and leisure activities, protect existing facilities, and support enhancement of recreational opportunities to increase economic, social, and environmental viability; encouraging tourism as an economic development strategy.			
<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Strategies</b>	<b>Planning Justification</b>	<b>Priority</b>	
Promote new recreational activities within the County.	Support projects that increase recreational activities in the county. Apply for or support grant applications from other entities that increase the recreational facilities in the County. Educate concerning the utilization of grant money such as the Community Block Grant for planning activities that increase recreational activities as a part of the trend toward increased quality of life. Encourage greenspace and recreational spaces to be included in residential subdivisions through design standards etc.	Recreation is important to the overall quality of life experienced in communities, when quality of life is improved people are happier in their communities and thus more involved which in turn creates a more positive community.	<b>1</b>	
Preserve the natural resources necessary for successful hunting and fishing activities through the preservation of timber stands, public stream access, protection of water quality and other natural amenities.	Promote managed timber program, support cleaner storm water runoff by minimizing requirements for pavement, incorporate storm water regulations into plans, and work with the Rural Water Association, Dept. of Ag, and WV soil conservation to protect our source water quality and quantity.		<b>2</b>	
Support sound development processes for private camping and recreational vehicle parks that promote the recreational aspects of such facilities.	Work with the health department, FEMA, the local floodplain managers, etc. to develop sound design guidelines for recreational vehicle parks and find a way to monitor the occupancy of such parks to prevent such parks from turning into long term housing.		<b>3</b>	

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## 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.

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



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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.

### SWOT ANALYSIS

The equivalent of a SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) was conducted as part of this 2011 plan. The following information was used in the formulation of this section of the plan.

#### 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.
- 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.



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- 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.

GOAL - Economic Development	Support policies that create an environment conducive to a strong and diverse regional economy, while acting as stewards of our existing resources.			
Objectives	Strategies	Planning Justification	Priority	
Encourage and support a wider variety of innovative commercial development throughout the county.	Update the zoning map and definitions to incorporate the new models of today's workforce and businesses such as increase in telecommuters, home based business, shared office space, entrepreneurial efforts, and agri-tourism, and move toward a flexible zoning model that considers the impacts of development and not just location. Work with RDA to explore the possibility of loosening restrictions on types of businesses allowed in industrial parks or creating a review process for acceptance into the parks, that would perhaps function like/with performance based zoning that allow for greater flexibility. Look at the possibility of investment (public or private) in commercial/office park to accomodate all sizes of upstarts.	Our current zoning ordinance needs to be updated to meet the needs of our current lifestyle, workforce, and creative entrepreneurs and telecommuters. A performance base zoning model would also allow flexibility of location for projects while adding the ability to give greater consideration to the impacts of the development.	4	
Develop working relationships with entities such as RDA, Eastern WV Community & Technical College, and The Chamber of Commerce, etc., so our planning efforts can support the future plans of these organizations and vice versa.	Continue to work with the Chamber of Commerce and attend meetings associated with main street revitalization, expand the communication and cooperation with the Eastern WV Community and Technical College IREED program, continue to open up pathways for two way communication with RDA. Communication efforts need to ensure all parties are making informed decisions toward the same goals.	The requirement in the state code for agencies to communicate and coordinate with the efforts of the Comprehensive Plan reduces waste of resources and redundancy of efforts. The formal agreement of the future direction of the locality (in the form of a Comp Plan) shows continuity which is better environment for investment - public and private.	2	
Work to promote Economic Development opportunities that utilize our natural and cultural resource but do not deplete or spoil them.	Since agriculture, rural environment, and natural resources have been identified as existing strengths, we need to use our strengths to further promote our economics while protecting those resources from depletion. We need to design our planning regulations in a way that will allow the planning commission to consider the long term cost/benefit of individual projects and make decisions based on whether the project uses sound design (performance based) and protects the resources we value while adding sufficient economic value. Develop policies that consider tourism investment as an economic driver that preserves resources and increases quality of life while creating employment opportunities.	Planning is designed to offer the citizens a voice in the planning/development process. The citizens of Hardy County have expressed long term concern about preserving the natural and cultural resources here. This can go hand in hand with economic development and growth if done using a well designed planning process.	1	
Reinforce the fact that quality of life and aesthetics of a community has an affect on nearly every other issue including the satisfaction/recruitment/retention of business and the workforce.	Recognize the interconnectness of social projects and development projects and try to help officials make smart, well balanced decisions that improves quality of life in the community, and promotes the types of development and jobs that meet the needs and desires of our population as identified through the local data collection efforts of the planning process.	According to the Center for Disease Control, health, jobs, housing, schools, neighborhood, support of culture, values, and spirituality are all key aspects of overall quality of life. Feeling stressed due to lack of services such as day care, elderly care, recreational opportunities, etc. can reduce the quality of life. We need to pay attention to the inconnectdness of the needs of our population (as they are expressed to us) and not assume those needs are being met. Addressing overall quality of life is a task of planning and if done succesfully can help maintain a solid workforce by attracting and retaining residents that contribut to a healthy community.	3	
		The design guidelines proposed in this plan for development corridors will support positive aesthetics, ease of mobility, and safety of citizens. The support for trails and other recreation projects as outlined in this plan will encourage good health access to outdoor recreation for citizens. The encouragement of resource protection will promote ecological and physical health of residents, and improving the two way communication between citizens and government will enable citizens to feel they have a voice in government. Since		



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## **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.

2014:

The Development Corridor Design Standards as described in the future land use section is a primary function of community design. The county is also involved with and supports the town of Moorefield’s and the town of Wardensville’s application into the ON TRAC Program which prepares them to apply or to coordinate with the goals of the Main Street USA program. This program focuses on community design principles that will improve the economic base and quality of life of downtown residents. The County also supports the CVB as they move toward a standard branding for the county that will also involve the coordination of design principles of everything from signage to brochures, to physical design components in the community.

### **SWOT ANALYSIS**

The equivalent of a SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) was conducted as part of this 2011 plan. The following information was used in the formulation of this section of the plan.



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### **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.

<b>GOAL - Community Design</b>	To identify and implement guidelines for construction, infrastructure, and landscape design that improves and enhances the rural look, feel, and historical context of the County's existing character.			
<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Strategies</b>	<b>Planning Justification</b>	<b>Priority</b>	
Develop a comprehensive and concise design guideline document for developers that clearly outlines the design preferences for development corridors or other areas as identified by the communities.	Work with DOT, the historic landmark commission, the chamber of commerce - main street initiative, CVB, the town planning commissions, and other entities that are concerned with the performance and aesthetics of community design elements to create a document that can be used as a concise guide to assist developers in designing projects that are in line with the community goals.	Design guidelines are documents created by communities that detail community standards for site planning (entrances, setbacks, circulation, parking, pedestrian space, buffers, and storm water), landscaping, lighting, signage and architectural design.	1	
Incorporate design standards into residential and commercial subdivisions.	In zoning and subdivision ordinance revisions add processes that enable the planning commission to consider sound design as requirement for approval, options for those design standards should be clearly outlined in design standard documents.	With the more flexible performance based zoning being proposed the planning commission would have the ability to look at the overall quality of a development proposal and set conditions to improve the design	2	



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## **SECTION 2.10 – PREFERRED DEVELOPMENT AREAS**

2014:

See the Preferred Development Areas on the Future land Use Map in **Appendix D**.

### **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.

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.

### **SWOT ANALYSIS**

The equivalent of a SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) was conducted as part of this 2011 plan. The following information was used in the formulation of this section of the plan.



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**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.

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<b>GOAL -Preferred Development</b>	Provide a rational pattern for future land development that encourages efficient and coordinated growth, provides guidance identifying suitable areas for development, and encourages economical infrastructure improvements in coordination with development opportunities.		
<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Strategies</b>	<b>Planning Justification</b>	<b>Priority</b>
Promote "smart growth" development in areas that would be preferred for future high impact growth - around urbanized areas with infrastructure access.	Develop regulations that focuses development into the Preferred Development areas on the future land use map. Those areas outline and define areas of preferred growth, due to proximity to infrastructure and services, and suitable ecological conditions. Work with towns to identify and coordinate these smart growth initiatives.	Addressing preferred development areas is a requirement of a comprehensive plan. In looking at our future goals for a more flexible zoning ordinance we need to keep a broad approach to our future land use thus have integrated the future land use and preferred development identification into one process.	2
Develop incentives to encourage growth, infill and redevelopment around existing population centers.	Work with entities to coordinate programs and incentives that focus growth on these particular areas instead offering equal incentives for all areas of the county. Work with RDA to try to come up with a plan to fill the existing industrial parks before creating new industrial areas. Work with the towns to plan for services that would be needed to expand around their periphery.	Keeping growth within preferred development growth boundaries is beneficial to everyone in the long term, especially in agricultural areas where land protection is of greater importance. Urban sprawl or poorly designed growth along corridors are costly (infrastructure), unsightly, and irreversible when it comes to protection of open space and ag lands.	1

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## **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.

### **SWOT ANALYSIS**

The equivalent of a SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) was conducted as part of this 2011 plan. The following information was used in the formulation of this section of the plan.

#### **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.



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**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.

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<b>GOAL - Renewal and Redevelopment</b>	Sustain existing favorable conditions and encourage renewal of vacant areas by encouraging various type of innovative/creative re-development in and around existing facilities and population centers.			
<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Strategies</b>	<b>Planning Justification</b>	<b>Priority</b>	
Educate public about possible innovative uses for existing structures.	Share success stories from other communities about creative re-development projects to spark interest in such. Support non-profit and public partnerships and encourage private investment in the renewal and redevelopment process.	Introducing new ideas into the community can spark ideas and energy about innovative project.	3	
Promote re-use of developed but underutilized land before development of untouched land.	Revise regulations to offer incentives in the permitting process that allow for ease of re-development of an existing structure and prioritization of development of vacant residential subdivided lots as opposed to the creation of additional subdivisions. Work with realtors to develop a database of available properties that would be available for small business that we could share with citizens looking to go before the board of zoning appeals to seek commercial approvals in residential or agricultural areas.	Offering options instead of roadblocks to non-permitted commercial use applications can provide multiple benefits to the community and citizens. The planning office can act as an informational hub for citizens and other local agencies.	2	
Develop policies to address abandon properties.	Consider one of the options promoted by the state of West Virginia to incent properties owners to re-use commercial buildings rather than let them sit empty or to use them as storage or other uses that do not utilize the potential of the property. Incent development of vacant residential lots instead of creation of new subdivided lots.	One of the main obstacles for entrepreneurs is building location. Connecting owners with entrepreneurs is an essential function of revitalization. It promotes re-use and cuts down on inexpensive commercial structures being abandoned in rural areas which is a blight to rural area.	1	



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## 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 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.

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:

- **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



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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.

### **SWOT ANALYSIS**

The equivalent of a SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) was conducted as part of this 2011 plan. The following information was used in the formulation of this section of the plan.

#### **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.
- 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.



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**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.

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## **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.

### **SWOT ANALYSIS**

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### **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
  - William Hawse house, County Route 8, Needmore



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- 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.

<b>GOAL - Historic Preservation</b>	Support the implementation of recreational and historic preservation goals that promote enhancement of facilities and programs that will increase travel and tourism through the region so that the economic benefit from tourism will enhance the local commercial vitality.			
<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Strategies</b>	<b>Planning Justification</b>	<b>Priority</b>	
Support the goals of the County's historic preservation entities.	Develop community design standards/guidelines that are sensitive to historic values and preserve historic sites and buildings in Hardy County, build upon existing architectural features and character.	It has been identified that the preservation of the culture and history of Hardy County is important to the citizens and their quality of life, it is also important to preserve the original design concepts of the area in order to promote those design elements to maintain the unique sense of place that is Hardy County.	1	
	Promote the practice of adaptive reuse for historic properties through the use of financial and regulatory incentives		2	

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## 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



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## SWOT ANALYSIS

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### 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.



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- 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

**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.

<b>GOAL - Tourism</b>	Support the development of the tourism industry as a viable component of the County's economic sustainability and as an asset to the wellbeing of its residents.			
<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Strategies</b>	<b>Planning Justification</b>	<b>Priority</b>	
Work with the Convention & Visitors Bureau's (CVB) to maximize their funding opportunities when possible.	Use the planning/zoning processes to help identify current and future properties subject to the hotel/motel tax. Share grant opportunities etc., with the CVB and formally support grant applications when appropriate. Assist in securing public/private investment in tourism development when appropriate.	The CVB is funded primarily through the hotel/motel tax. Some people in the county are providing services that should fall under the hotel/motel taxing process who are not paying those local taxes. The land use/zoning process can catch some of those providers through the requirement of a "change of use permit" when changing the land use of a property.	4	
Support the CVB, Chamber of Commerce, and municipalities with expansion of the area's tourism related activities while considering the impact that development has on our tourism industry and communities involved.	When modifying zoning details and planning concepts, the viability of tourism activities should be a consideration, especially in and around areas of park lands (national, state and local), and existing tourism related sites. Planning elements should be used to enhance the usability, accessibility and aesthetics of land use to create a more positive experience for tourists and effected residents. Involve the CVB as a partner in planning issues that involve tourism.		2	
Preserve the natural resources necessary to maintain the nature based tourism activities through the preservation of timber stands, public stream access, protection of water quality and other natural amenities.	Promote managed timber program, support cleaner storm water runoff by minimizing requirements for pavement, incorporate storm water regulations into plans, and work with the Rural Water Association, Dept. of Ag, and WV soil conservation to protect our source water quality and quantity. Utilize Planning to protect against overdevelopment of at risk or environmentally/economically fragile areas. Work with the CVB to identify and update mapping of tourism related natural, scenic, recreational, ecological, agricultural, historic, cultural and traditional business sites, events and opportunities.		1	
Recognizing the economic potential of tourism growth, the County should work with and support the CVB and other entities to encourage and support the development of tourism opportunities such as fairs, festivals, and niche group activities and events, (i.e. motorcyclists, bicyclists, water recreationalists, railroad handcar visitors, hikers, etc.).	Proactively address how to handle issues that may arise with events and large gatherings, such as whether to require permits that notify public services, transportation, police, etc. Support the exploration of new natural, recreational, cultural, historic and traditional assets and support their development when in line with other planning goals. Within the planning processes, consider the accessibility of all assets by an aging and diverse population. Be involved in the educational opportunities that help the community to create support for and understanding of the importance of tourism to the economic sustainability of the County and to understand how those resources promote a better way of life for the County's residents.		3	



## **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.

2014:

In 2014 the Hardy County Planning office utilized a grant to have the WVU GIS Tech Center create a detailed current land use map. The input data came from the Assessor's IAS system. It was determined that the level of importance placed on the land use data by the Hardy County appraisers was significant and that this land use information is very accurate. The categories were derived from the categories used in the IAS system and



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detailed by the GIS Tech Center using other assessment data such as the structure data. See **Appendix C**.

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
- 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.



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### **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.

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**SECTION 3.2 – FUTURE LAND USE PLAN (SEE MAP IN APPENDIX D)**

**Land Use Planning Concept**

Recommendations for the development of the County's future land uses are presented on the Future Land Use Map, which separates the overall development into four future land use categories or “districts”.

- Preferred Development Areas (Floodplain overlay excluded)
  - Municipalities (Moorefield & Wardensville)
  - Activity Centers (Baker, Old Fields, and Mathias)
  - Commercial Corridors (Portions of US Rt. 220 and Rt.259)
  - Small Community Centers (Arkansaw, Durgon, Perry, Peru, Rig)
- Rural/Agricultural Districts; (Overlay showing Floodplain)
- Residential Districts
  - A. Existing Residential
  - B. Residential included in Preferred Development Areas
  - C. Planned Unit Developments (PUDs)
- Public Lands

These land use categories are described in terms specific to their respective roles in guiding and managing county growth and development. The description of categories include discussion of the general types, intensities, and character of development that should be encouraged within these areas. The categories 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.

It should be noted that the floodplain areas on the Future Land Use map are not to be considered part of the Preferred Development Area. Consideration of impact should also be given when subdivision is proposed on prime or statewide significant soils as designated on the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) soil maps.



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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:

**Preferred Development Area - Around Municipalities**

**A. Designation of Preferred Development Areas Surrounding Municipalities**

Moorefield and Wardensville are the two incorporated municipalities in Hardy County. These Preferred Development Areas are around those municipalities that generally have served, and are expected to continue to serve, as the principal high density residential, commercial, and industrial center for the County. These areas, by definition, comprise the most suitable (preferred) locations for future growth and development in Hardy County due to proximity to existing services and infrastructure, and suitable ecological conditions such as lack of floodplain, steep slopes or difficult soils. The containment of growth, in and around these areas, will prevent the outward sprawl of development into other areas of the County and concentrate future development in areas where residents can be provided with utilities, services, and employment opportunities in an economical and fiscally prudent manner. The Planning Commissions from the towns of Moorefield and Wardensville; the municipalities at the center of these “municipal preferred development areas”, have been in communication with the County Planning Commission during these plan revisions. Those entities are supportive of this revised Future Land Use Plan and Future Land Use Map, including the preferred development boundaries. The two planning commissions have reviewed this plan and gained support from their respective Town Councils.

It is important to note that the Preferred Development Areas are just naturally 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 for higher impact development such as commercial, industrial, and higher density residential. These services include but are not limited to law enforcement, roads, water lines, sewer treatment facilities, and consumer needs.



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The primary purpose of designating a Preferred Development Area is to map, in advance, those areas where government entities could accept responsibility for providing infrastructure and services and accept the responsibility for working with the development interests of the Towns and 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, or private developer.

The Comprehensive Plan recognizes that the overall character of a Preferred Development Area, 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.

### **Planning for Preferred Development Areas around Municipalities**

Ensuring high quality new development within the Preferred Development Areas 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. Office, Commercial & Industrial complex facilities as well as high density and multi-family housing should be encouraged to maximize the efficient use of space in the development areas where public sewer is available. Furthermore, permitted density and intensity should not be uniform throughout the Development area, and creative reuse of existing structures/properties should be priority. Also, existing single family neighborhoods should be buffered from non-residential and high-density residential developments.

Standards for commercial and industrial development within Preferred Development Areas 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. Elements that should be included in the design of development in the Preferred Development Areas are: 1) mixed-use developments; 2) pedestrian access; and 3) greenways/bike paths linking various developments and the municipality.

The following standards should be in place to guide the development within these preferred development areas.

1. Residential Density – Residential areas in the preferred development area (where public water AND sewer are available) should be high density and multifamily housing should be encouraged. The density and design of the



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- adjacent town may be continued into the county area. The standards for these developments shall comply with the subdivision and zoning ordinance.
2. Commercial Design Standards – Commercial Design Standards should be developed that will help maintain the character of the area, if the town and county Planning Commissions could work together to design these standards, the continuity of the design would provide for a much more desirable outcome.

**Preferred Development Areas -Activity Centers**

**B. Designation of Preferred Development Activity Centers (Baker and Old Fields, Mathias)**

The Activity Centers should accommodate the majority of the projected future county growth in areas other than those around the municipalities. Historic settlement patterns in certain locations, or proximity to the intersection of major 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 3) Mathias.** 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 in areas where there is no municipality. From a planning perspective, these are the second most desirable locations (second to areas adjacent to municipalities) for higher impact development. Again, following this plan for development patterns make fiscally and ecologically responsible development more attainable. 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, office, retail and service development, and in some instances high density residential. Industrial development may also be appropriate in some Activity Centers. Industrial development



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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.

### **Planning for Development Activity Centers**

Over time, 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 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, while protecting our valuable agricultural resources and provide an alternative to strip development along major highways.

Development design standards for Activity Centers should be framed to establish a clear sense of community character. 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. There are three issues that need to be addressed specifically in and around Activity Centers:

1. Residential Density – Residential areas in the preferred development area (where public water AND sewer are available) should be higher density than the surrounding rural county areas. < 1 acre per dwelling unit is acceptable and multifamily housing is encouraged. The standards for these developments shall comply with the subdivision and zoning ordinance.
2. Commercial Design Standards – Commercial Design Standards should be developed that will help maintain the character of the area, if the towns and county work together to design the standards the continuity of the design would provide for a much more desirable outcome.
3. Highway (Commercial Corridor) Development Design Standards should be put in place to help maintain the character of the area and maintain easy and safe traffic flow. Shared access (service) drives are critical to prevent traffic issues and slowing of traffic along the corridor development area.



## **Preferred Development Area – Highway Corridors**

### **C. Designation of A Highway Corridor Development Area**

The Highway Corridor designation is not intended to restrict development but is intended to manage the design of development in a way that maintains the character of the area. The design is managed by developing design guidelines intended to address architectural and aesthetic controls as well as special access and buffering requirements along the county's major highways. Designated Highway Corridor Development Areas are shown on the Future Land Use Map, most of which are currently zoned commercial along major routes. The areas already zoned commercial include:

- US Rt. 220 from Moorefield North to Old Fields
- State Rt. 259 from Lost City to Lost River

The area designated as preferred development area that is not currently zoned for commercial includes:

- US Rt. 220 from Old fields to the Northern County Boundary

Highway Development Corridors, as defined in this section, will encompass land areas currently zoned commercial that run along highways and the area north of Old Fields along US Rt 220 to the county boundary, and would apply to any commercial projects proposed (to BZA) in other zoning categories anywhere along the designated highways. The Highway Development Corridor is an area within which certain specific public objectives relating to good design, aesthetics and architectural plan review should be administered by the county through development design guidelines but created through a coordinated multi-agency effort.

### **Planning for Highway Development Corridors**

Although 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. More importantly, good design is also about convenience of travel, efficient use of resources, and further development potential (or draw) to the area.



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Highway (Commercial Corridor) Development Design Standards should be created for the County in coordination with the towns. These design standards would initially apply to the two areas currently zoned commercial (listed above) that run along highway corridors; US Rt. 220 North of Moorefield extending to Old Fields and on to the county boundary, and Rt. 259 between Lost City and Lost River. The development in these areas should be guided by Development Design Standards that provide standards for site planning entrances, setbacks, circulation, parking pedestrian space, sidewalks, buffers, stormwater, landscaping, lighting, signage, and architectural standards.

Future development of lands, within the Highway Development Corridors, may be subject to the standards of the particular base zoning district in which they occur as well as the following design standards that are specific to the these corridor areas. 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 will be developed in coordination with other entities such as DOH and DEP.

Standards specific to the highway corridors may provide for:

- *Site planning for projects that would include but are not limited to:*
  - *Entrances*
  - *Setbacks*
  - *Circulation*
  - *Parking (location)*
  - *Pedestrian Space*
  - *Sidewalks and multi-modal inclusion*
  - *Buffers & Screening*
  - *Storm Water*
- *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 major 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;*



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- *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 through or corner lot, intentionally designed so that the front lot line faces a local street rather than facing a parallel major thoroughfare.*

**Preferred Development Area – Small Community Centers**

**D. Designation of Preferred Development Areas - Small 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. 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. 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.

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



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plays an important role in serving its surrounding area. Community Centers include Rio, Arkansas, Bean Settlement, Lost River, Lost City, Perry, Rig, Durgon, and Peru.

### **Planning for Small 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 that live in the surrounding community

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*
- *Businesses should be locally owned and designed to serve the needs of the local population.*
- *Continue to provide limited employment opportunity;*
- *Provide a place to concentrate commercial activity;*
- *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 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.



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1. Residential and Commercial Density - This area is designated for medium density developments – commercial and residential. If public water and sewer is available these areas would be suitable for medium to high density residential developments which would be 1 acre or less per dwelling unit. Commercial development proposed for the area should be encouraged to locate within the community center.

### **Rural/Agricultural Districts**

**The designation of Rural/Agricultural 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 can 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.

### **Planning for Rural Agricultural Districts**

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. Agricultural support industries (farm implement dealers, supply services, storage and process facilities,



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etc.) and some farm related commercial activities 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. The zoning should work together with the subdivision regulations to keep residential density low in the rural/agriculture district. The residential density for this area should be **> 5 acres per dwelling unit, and 1 acre or greater for family subdivisions.**

An option should be added to the zoning ordinance for **Planned unit Developments**. This would give developers an avenue to request a zoning change in these rural/ag areas for higher density residential development if they provide a sound plan for the creation of a sustainable development that addressed issues specific to their location and the concerns of the adjacent owners. These detailed plans would address issues such as infrastructure, density, ecological concerns, transportation issues, mixed use, and clustering in order to provide the planning commission and planning department with sufficient information to make informed an decision about the overall impact and appropriateness of the development in that location.

### Residential Districts

**The formal designation of Residential Districts**, is designed to highlight areas that are appropriate for higher density residential subdivisions, or that are currently being used as such. There are two types of residential districts, only one is shown on the future land use map – the existing residential subdivisions:

- A. **Existing Residential Subdivisions**. Included in this category are the residential subdivisions that are already established as residential neighborhoods (some of which are zoned residential) and are subdivided on record in the Hardy County Clerk's Office. It is understood that within these existing subdivisions established densities may be inconsistent with those recommended for future development patterns. The list of existing subdivisions should be refined and zoning should be changed to match the location of these subdivisions.
- B. **Planned Unit Developments** - these mixed use and/or themed residential subdivisions are not currently located on the map, but can be proposed in any area



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of the county as long as the impacts of the development are addressed in the application. Those impacts and the details of the process shall be identified and added to the zoning and subdivision ordinance. The future land use map will need to be changed when such proposals are accepted and approved.

The creation of a formal Existing Residential Subdivision Category on the map is intended to minimize the concerns of existing property owners inside residential subdivisions regarding the impact of new plans and development codes that will shift the future direction and location of development. The acknowledgement of true residential land use status and zoning should help allay concerns about future development standards applying to existing residential areas, and will make the future land use map consistent with current zoning (once zoning map is changed to reflect actual existing subdivisions).

### **Planning for the Residential District**

There are currently several smaller lot residential subdivisions that are still zoned Agriculture, this issues should be addressed in an upcoming zoning ordinance revision. The text of any future ordinance amendments should permit their continued development and prescribe standards for protection of these existing residential neighborhoods.

It is recommended that these residential districts be broken down into different types or levels or residential zoning when the next zoning ordinance changes takes place. Currently the density for proposed residential subdivisions should be as follows:

1. The areas most acceptable in the county for medium to high density residential subdivisions should be provided with public water and sewer prior to construction and for single family maintain a density of .25 acres per dwelling unit to 5 acres per dwelling unit with more units per acre density allowed for multifamily projects. The specifications can be proposed for PUDs if they include provisions for water/sewer (other than well/septic) to include higher density subdivisions.
2. The Planned Unit Development or PUD may be requested in the rural/ag district and would include a rezoning and a major subdivision approval. The general guidelines should be developed and added to the zoning and subdivision ordinances to create an avenue for a developer to come before the Planning Commission with a comprehensive subdivision plan that addresses the impacts of the development on the rural current land use and provides a sound plan for infrastructure.



### **Public Lands**

**The designation of Public Land** is intended to identify the land that is designated as public open space in order to plan around this static factor in the community and preserve the character of the surrounding areas. Public land areas are intended to provide for a full range of recreational and open space activities and recreational housing or related facilities as requested by the public land owner.

#### **Planning for Public Lands**

Public Lands, as a component of the Comprehensive Plan, is an area on which our land use planning has limited affects. The National Park Service does recognize that their actions are required to be in compliance with our Comprehensive Plan, and the planning office is in contact with them and has commented on their plan.

#### **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, the floodplain boundary being the most restrictive area due to other state and federal regulations as well as the local policies.

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 Preferred Development Areas, and should preserve land in the Rural/Agricultural Districts. Existing residential subdivision areas are recognized so that the areas are later zoned to reflect this use. This will help ensure grandfathering. 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 area.

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



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channels anticipated future growth into a more harmonious and efficient pattern that is consistent with community goals and objectives.

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## **CHAPTER FOUR – IMPLEMENTATION**

### **SECTION 4.1 – OVERVIEW**

In order to implement this plan in a successful manner, it is essential to conduct a balanced and realistic planning approach. The true implementation of this plan is not only reliant on the awareness and continual tracking on the part of the Hardy County Planning Commission and Staff, but also the cooperation of all of the other entities listed in this plan. Education of and communication with those entities a perhaps the most important component of implementation.

Even though the state of WV outlines the procedures and requirements for a Comprehensive Plan, most local and state agencies do not realize that the ultimate purpose of the Comprehensive Plan is to get everyone on the same page and moving in the same direction in order to reduce waste of resources and money and prevent duplication of efforts. Those local and state agencies are supposed to not only be aware of and provide input for the comprehensive plan (that is in line with the code applicable to the plan), but also follow the comprehensive plan when making decisions and policies of their own and be in continual contact with the county planning office to help them monitor the situation. So, as the county implements this plan, educational opportunities and communication will be a large part of that implementation.

Even though it is the goal, all of the objectives and strategies are not likely to be implemented completely before the next update. In this 2015 revision, the goals and objectives were compressed and simplified and the strategies were designed based on the knowledge of the current system and capabilities of our county resources. There was an attempt to set specific strategies that are specific to our local situation that can be initiated in the next five years. Since this was only a revision, the official update will be due again in 2021. With the revised goal charts for each section the Hardy County Planning Commission and staff have prioritized the objectives. One being of the highest priority. That information can be found on the chart in each section.

These objectives will be added to the County Planners annual report under the “tasks to be competed” section. The status of these objectives will be evaluated at the end of each year in the “summary of progress made report” to determine success. These reports are presented to the Planning Commission for review and acceptance, and are passed on to the County Commission.



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**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 goals, objectives, and strategies charts in this plan. In order to operationalize these objectives, and strategies and the locally expressed goals, an implementation agenda must be put into action. This agenda can be achieved through various planning program components beginning with updates to the ordinance to bring them into to compliance with the plan.

The impact of the plan, in the long term, will be measured by the degree to which the plan's objectives are translated into reality. These, 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 design guidelines 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 goals, objectives, and strategies chart in 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 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.



See appendices:

A: Public Input Procedures

B: Population, Economics, and  
Housing Study 1950-2012

C: Current Land Use Map

D: Future Land Use Map