

Draft Goals & Objectives for the 2045 Comprehensive Plan Update JCDA Action Item Review

Theme One: Quality Land Use and Growth Management

1. Ensure that future land use regulations and policies support the development rights of residential and non-residential properties.

- i. Establish a simplified variety of commercial, residential, and mixed-use zoning categories and Land Use Classifications appropriate to the County's needs.

Recommendation:

Action item a: The County Planning Department will educate the public (via education materials and presentations) about the County's current zoning system and the process for seeking amendments or other changes. The education will include information comparing key features of Jefferson County's current zoning system with that of neighboring counties, including Virginia and Maryland counties that are contiguous to Jefferson County. (J. Gatz)

- ii. Continue to encourage the utilization of cluster subdivisions as the preferred form of residential development within rural areas.
- iii. Align existing land use regulations with West Virginia State code and streamline land development process.
- iv. Allow additional commercial and institutional uses in all zoning districts by right including medical facilities.

Recommendation:

Amend iv. to include "and agricultural sales and services." (staff) (Forwarded to Full Board from Ag)

2. Concentrate high-density development in the County's Preferred Growth Areas (PGA), Villages, and municipal Growth Boundaries (UGB&GMB) where infrastructure exists or is made available.

- i. Encourage the adaptive reuse of existing buildings and previously used sites within Jefferson County, paying particular attention to brownfield and greyfield sites.

Recommendation:

- Amend i to include: "dilapidated structures and vacant buildings." (staff)
- Action item "a. The JCDA will work with municipalities, the County, the State, and other stakeholders to identify these sites and redevelop them." (staff)

- Action Item: The County, municipalities, the Jefferson County Development Authority, and private entities will collaborate to recruit new and existing businesses and industries to use existing buildings and previously used parcels (including brownfields and “greyfields” specified below) for new development including business parks and commercial sites. The County Planning Department will produce / publish and maintain a directory of previously used sites, including Brownfields and “Greyfield” sites, that are good candidates for redevelopment. (J. Gatz)
- Action item: The County will work with the State to ensure the completion of the redevelopment of the Hill Top House Hotel site in Harpers Ferry which has significant potential for positive redevelopment and the creation of hundreds of new jobs for county residents. (J. Gatz)
 - ii. Encourage expansions to the village areas and to provide a continuation of village scale and design in these areas.

Recommendation:

- Define “expansions” and “continuation of village scale and design.” (staff)
 - iii. Coordinate with utility providers operating in Jefferson County to identify appropriate locations to provide new service based on existing and proposed residential development and infrastructure while supporting the enhancement of existing infrastructure.

Recommendation:

- Strike “residential.” (staff)
- Amend sentence to read “while supporting the enhancement, *repair, and modernization* [suggested change] of existing infrastructure.” (staff)
- Action item: The County will coordinate with and provide financial support to the existing municipal water systems (CTUB, Harpers Ferry Water and Shepherdstown Water) to ensure that they are able to provide expanded service in locations designated for future residential development. (J. Gatz)
 - iv. Reevaluate the Preferred Growth Areas to reflect infrastructure expansions and land use changes.

Recommendation:

- Reword iv: “Ensure coordination with infrastructure service providers in Preferred Growth Areas.” (staff)

3. Support agricultural activities and promote agritourism.

- i. Enhance the viability of existing farmlands within Jefferson County by allowing a flexible range of agricultural and/or artisan uses within existing rural areas.
- ii. Encourage farm operators to collaborate with County officials in identifying potential economic development opportunities related to agriculture in Jefferson County.

Recommendation:

- Reword ii. to: “Encourage economic opportunities on and/or by agricultural producers.” (staff) (Forwarded to the full board by the Agriculture Committee)
- Action item a: “The JCDA will work with the County and other stakeholders to review alcohol policies for the benefit of agricultural producers and the agritourism industry.” (staff) (Forwarded to the full board by the Agriculture Committee)
- Action item b: “The JCDA will work with stakeholders to attract a meat processor to Jefferson County.” (staff) (Forwarded to the full board by the Agriculture Committee)
- Action item c: “Support and encourage farmers markets.” (staff) (Forwarded to the full board by the Agriculture Committee)
- Action item d: “Support economic opportunities relating to the aggregation, processing, and distribution of agricultural products.” (staff) (Forwarded to the full board by the Agriculture Committee)

- iii. Support programs for the education of and resources for the creation and viability of new generations of farmers.

Recommendation:

- Action item a: “The JCDA will work with other stakeholders to provide education opportunities to promote the business of farming from generation to generation.” (staff) (Forwarded to the full board by the Agriculture Committee)

- iv. Update existing land use regulations to allow for diverse compatible and complementary uses on agricultural properties and within rural areas of Jefferson County.

Recommendation:

- Action item a: “The JCDA will work with stakeholders to promote similar regulations at the State level.” (staff) (Forwarded to the full board by the Agriculture Committee)

- v. Support on-farm agricultural processing businesses.

Recommendation:

- Strike “on-farm” (staff) (Forwarded to the full board by the Agriculture Committee)
- Add an additional section, section “vi. Promote agritourism.” (staff) (Forwarded to the full board)

by the Agriculture Committee)

- Add action item a to objective vi. Promote agritourism, “The JCDA will collaborate with stakeholders such as the CVBs to promote agritourism.” (staff) (Forwarded to the full board by the Agriculture Committee)
- Add action item b to objective vi. Promote agritourism, “The JCDA will work with state and federal grant programs to advocate for regulations to allow for agritourism as an approved use of agricultural grant and loan funds.” (staff) (Forwarded to the full board by the Agriculture Committee)

Theme Two: Promoting Tourism and Conservation

4. Encourage the preservation of historical sites and leverage heritage and cultural tourism to foster local business growth and development.

Recommendation:

- Strike “leverage” and insert “support.” (staff)
 - i. Encourage the utilization of existing historic and agricultural areas for a variety of uses in ways that respect their historical function or setting.

Recommendation:

- Strike “in ways that respect their historical function or setting.” (staff)
- Add action item a, “Allow access for commercial purposes—for example, commercial walking tours.”
 - ii. Encourage the adaptive reuse of existing non-residential structures for housing.

Recommendation:

- Strike “non-residential” and “for housing.” (staff)
- Action item a, “The JCDA will work with Planning and the municipalities in the adaptive reuse of existing structures. (staff)
- Action item: The County will develop and maintain a public catalog of existing non-residential structures that are adaptable for reconfiguration as housing. (J. Gatz)
 - iii. Identify and implement feasible strategies to ensure short-term rental compliance with local ordinances.

Recommendation:

- Add goal iv, “Encourage visitation to secondary and tertiary locations in the County.” (staff)
- Add action item a, “Capitalize on visitation from localities who limit the sale of vehicles to zero-emission vehicles by installing EV chargers in locations with high-potential visitor interest as a secondary or tertiary location. Example: near restaurants and shopping.” (staff)

5. Encourage land conservation programs to help preserve the rural character of Jefferson County.

- i. Financially support county conservation agencies including but not limited to the Farmland Preservation Board and Historic Landmarks Commission.

Recommendation:

- The County will provide financing and other support to the Farmland Preservation Board, the County Historic Landmarks Commission, and private entities such as the Shepherdstown Battlefield Preservation Association to support further development of farmland preservation

easements and educate the public on the value of preserving historic sites. (J. Gatz)

- ii. Support agricultural cooperatives and food hubs in Jefferson County.
- iii. Provide equal opportunity to small and large farms.

6. Balance the existing preservation of Jefferson County's natural resources with providing additional access to and utilization of outdoor recreational tourism.

- i. Investigate additional opportunities for public river access.

Recommendation:

Action item: The JCDA will prioritize expanding the tourism industry in the county, specifically by working to increase the number of tourism providers that manage outdoor recreation opportunities including activities that have a mission to provide recreation opportunities while preserving the county's natural resources. (J. Gatz)

- ii. Develop connectivity to existing pedestrian and bike trails.

Theme Three: Community Connections

7. Collaborate with state and regional transportation partners to enhance the built environment to promote safety on and around state and municipal roads and lessen congestion.
 - i. Continue to coordinate with WVDOH related to access and transportation improvement decisions regarding local development review.
 - ii. Actively coordinate with HEPMPO, WVDOH, Municipalities and other appropriate stakeholders to identify potential highway, rail, bike, and pedestrian safety concerns within Jefferson County and promote safety measures.
 - iii. Advocate for new developments to utilize traffic calming measures and building safe roads for pedestrians, cyclists, and motorists.

Recommendation:

- In objective iii., strike “new developments to utilize.” (staff)
 - Action item a, “The JCDA will work with stakeholders to support train travel to and from the County.” (staff)
 - Action item b, “County adopts and encourages municipalities to adopt a Compete Streets Policy as the default approach to development as the Federal Highway Administration suggests.” (Elizabeth Ricketts, added Nov. 6)
 - iv. Identify methods to improve public transportation and highway connectivity into adjoining states by working with HEPMPO, WVDOH, EPTA, and agencies in Maryland, Pennsylvania, the District of Columbia, and Virginia.
8. Foster a culture of public engagement that effectively communicates policy-making decisions.
 - i. Ensure public hearing and workshops are held in accordance with state code and local regulations.
 9. Work with partners to protect the watersheds of Jefferson County and preserve the natural environment.
 - i. Encourage developers to build new subdivisions to meet standards set by regional or national sustainable building organizations.

Recommendation:

- Action item: The County will enact and enforce ordinances that require housing developers to meet sustainable building standards, including model standards. (J. Gatz)

- Action item: The County Planning Department implement a public education campaign with information on sustainable building standards and methods. (J. Gatz)
 - ii. Coordinate with local and regional partners regarding information and activities related to meeting the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Implementation Plan goals and property owners to enact voluntary recommendations.
 - iii. Work with property owners and applicable agencies to identify voluntary ways to protect unique natural features and the watersheds of Jefferson County.
 - iv. Collaborate with applicable agencies, local watershed groups, and private property owners to identify funding for the maintenance and upgrade of existing septic systems.

Recommendation:

- Action item a: Encourage the deployment of public water and sewer within growth boundaries in Jefferson County. (staff)
- Action item: The County will work with the State for State funding to support further studies of the negative impact of failing septic systems across the county. Such studies include the ongoing studies administered by the Blue Ridge Watershed Coalition and Jefferson County Foundation on the negative impact of failed septic systems on water quality, including well water and finished water from local water systems that is made available for consumption by county residents and livestock, and strategies for remediation of existing home and subdivision-managed septic systems, and other septic system that are more than 30 years old. (J. Gatz)
- Action item: The County will use funding allocated by the State of West Virginia and other sources to support local water systems (specifically, CTUB, Harpers Ferry Water, and Shepherdstown Water) in administering remediation efforts to minimize the amount of PFAS in finished water from those systems. (J. Gatz)
- Action item: The County will work with residents, industry, and municipalities to ensure that other water systems (including American Water) successfully administer appropriate actions to ensure the water they sell to county residents and industry contains acceptable levels of PFAS chemicals. As part of this effort, the County will enact ordinances to ensure that non-municipal water systems operating in the County will be subject to County fines or other financial requirements if it is determined that they have failed to maintain systems adequate for minimizing PFAS chemicals in the water they sell to residents. (J. Gatz)

10. Support a variety of public and private educational opportunities in Jefferson County.
 - i. Coordinate with the Jefferson County School Board to identify appropriate locations to develop new schools based on existing and proposed residential development and infrastructure.
 - ii. Support the efficient enhancement and renovation of existing Jefferson County School buildings.
 - iii. Continue to assess school impact fees as development occurs.

Recommendation:

- Action item a: Reevaluate school impact fees and then assess fees commensurate with the impact of development and increased population on school buildings. (staff)
- Action item: The Jefferson County Board of Education will collaborate with public and private entities to monitor the negative impacts of the County's decision to remove impact fees on new housing developments. The Board of Education will collaborate with private sector experts on education funding to publish an annual public report on the negative impact of the lack of such fees on the quality of public education in the county. (J. Gatz)

11. Align expansion of County park facilities and programs with federal, state, and municipal recreation providers to ensure that a wide variety of park and recreation opportunities are available throughout Jefferson County.
 - i. Continue to evaluate the need for and financing of a public pool or aquatic center.
 - ii. Coordinate with local, state, and regional governments, non-profits, and community groups to identify funding sources for recreational facilities.
 - iii. Support the expansion of park lands and adoption of Master Plans or existing park utilization.

Theme Four: Growing a Diverse Economy

12. Foster job development in Jefferson County by promoting diverse businesses; employment opportunities; local business entrepreneurship; and professional service jobs.

Recommendation:

- Reword goal 12: “Foster job development in Jefferson County by: promoting diversified industries; promoting employment opportunities; encouraging local business entrepreneurship; and, encouraging professional jobs.” (staff)
 - i. Collaborate with the Jefferson County Development Authority and other agencies to build and expand existing local businesses and to enable the start-up of new businesses within Jefferson County.

Recommendation:

- Reword objective i. to read: “The Jefferson County Development Authority will collaborate with stakeholders to build and expand existing businesses, support the start-up of new businesses, and attract new businesses to Jefferson County.” (staff)
- Action item a: The JCDA will host small business development classes in collaboration with stakeholders. (staff)
- Action item b: The JCDA will hold business retention and expansion visits to assist local businesses. (staff)
- Action item c: The JCDA will attract and/or encourage local development within the following sectors, among others: government contracting, meat processing, agribusiness, tourism, community development, etc. (staff)
- Action item: The County Government and municipalities will collaborate with the Jefferson County Development Authority in providing supports for small business development including such activities as free entrepreneurship classes, financial assistance, and assistance with locating small commercial businesses in downtown municipal areas. (J. Gatz)
- Action item: The County Government and relevant municipalities will collaborate with the JCDA to provide public awareness programming about the availability of financing, particularly for businesses that locate in existing Federal Opportunity Zone census tracts in Charles Town, Ranson, Kearnesville, and other localities and neighborhoods. (J. Gatz)
- Action item: The County Government and municipalities will collaborate with the JCDA to develop strong partnerships with area financial institutions, including non-profit lenders that specialize in providing business financing to new and emergency businesses that are in the Federal Opportunity Zone census tracts and other eligible businesses. (J. Gatz)
 - ii. Support vocational training opportunities for students of all ages in skilled trade programs and higher education to create a flexible, resilient workforce.

13. Develop an environment that promotes existing and new businesses by expanding necessary infrastructure within the Preferred Growth Areas (PGA), Villages, and municipal Growth Boundaries (UGB&GMB).
 - i. Utilize existing infrastructure to allow construction of village-scaled businesses, residential uses, and community facilities with Village areas and potential village expansion areas.
 - ii. Allow small-scale commercial and multi-family uses in existing areas that have the potential to be designated as a village at a future date.
 - iii. Provide incentives and opportunities for businesses to relocate or expand their operations within the County.

Recommendation:

- Action item a: Encourage the deployment of infrastructure to PGAs, Villages, and MGBs/ UGBs. (staff)
 - Action item: The County will institutionalize effective incentives and assistance to encourage businesses to relocate or expand their operations in the county. Any such incentive will be shaped specifically for businesses that show significant need and clear opportunity for success and that pledge to provide jobs for a specific number of county residents within x years from receiving the county incentive. (J. Gatz)
- iv. Work with utility providers to ensure public and private infrastructure is in place within UGBs, PGAs, and Villages to enable economic development.

Recommendation:

- The County will collaborate with the relevant municipalities to determine the capacity of existing roadways, water/sewer, electrical and cable/broadband infrastructure within the existing Preferred Growth Areas (PGA). Where it is determined that the existing infrastructure is lacking, the County will give preference to existing municipal systems (e.g., water and sewer systems) in expanding their service to the PGAs. (J. Gatz)
- The County will work with the State to fully address water quality issues related to failing water wells / septic tanks in PGAs. (J. Gatz)

Theme Five: Creating Livability

14. Promote a countywide expansion of activities, amenities, and entertainment for all Jefferson County residents.

- i. Collaborate with the Jefferson County Development Authority and local businesses to identify opportunities and programs that would aid in retaining young residents within Jefferson County.

Recommendation:

- Reword i. to read: “Collaborate with the Jefferson County Development Authority and local businesses to identify opportunities and programs to aid in retaining and attracting families, early-career adults, and seniors.” (staff)
- Action item: The County will provide financial support to the JCDA to develop and administer addition services that assist emerging commercial businesses by end of FY 2025. Under this initiative, JCDA will administer an aggressive program to develop information for feasibility and marketing studies for private entities that are exploring launching new commercial businesses or expanding existing commercial businesses from within or outside of the county, particularly commercial businesses that will provide entertainment and recreational opportunities for families and youth. (J. Gatz)
- Action item: The County will provide financial support to the JCDA to expand its work with local lenders and others to identify financing for commercial businesses (new and expanding business) that provide entertainment and recreational opportunities for families and youth. (J. Gatz)

- ii. Support programs that provide services and entertainment for residents of Jefferson County.
- iii. Explore International Dark Sky Association recommended standards to reduce light pollution.

15. Enhance public services and public safety to meet the needs of Jefferson County residents.

- i. Coordinate with EPTA to improve transit service within Jefferson County and the Eastern Panhandle as a whole.
- ii. Ensure access to emergency services in Jefferson County.
- iii. Identify ways to expand medical services and wellness programs.

16. Improve interconnectivity by enhancing and expanding pedestrian and bike paths.

- i. Establish that new development adjacent to municipal boundaries, Villages, or within UGBs is designed and built in a way that enables connectivity to the existing street and infrastructure network for the future connectivity as development is extended to these areas.

- ii. Collaborate with WVDOH to connect the Route 9 bike path into Ranson.
 - iii. Continue to support construction of Shepherdstown bike path from Shepherdstown Middle School to Morgan Grove Park and Shepherdstown Library.
 - iv. Require sidewalks to be constructed or easements for their implementation be included within and connecting to existing and new development.
 - v. Develop a path connecting Ranson to Sam Michaels Park.
17. Encourage a diversity of housing options including attainable and senior housing availability and accessibility to current and incoming residents.
- i. Work with county residents, members of the development community, and local and regional non-profit organizations to identify ways to integrate attainable housing with existing and new communities in Jefferson County.
 - ii. Identify and utilize private and public funding for the development of attainable housing in Jefferson County.
 - iii. Encourage developers, contractors, and homeowners to build and renovate residential developments to meet the needs of residents across the entire lifecycle.
 - iv. Encourage the development of communities that provide a variety of care for elderly and/or disabled residents within Jefferson County in close proximity to transportation corridors, medical facilities, and everyday need.
 - v. Identify methods to lower the cost of constructing attainable housing within Jefferson County while ensuring a high quality of housing in conjunction with local non-profits and housing providers.

Recommendation:

- Add vi: Identify areas to zone for high-density residential structures. These areas should have a plan for water and sewer access, should be along high-traffic migration routes, have sidewalks to encourage pedestrian foot traffic, and should have zoning for first-floor amenities. (staff)

