

Explanation of Amendments: Community Character

Amended Goals, Strategies, and Actions

Following are revisions requested by the Steering Committee to the goals, strategies, and actions at its March 23, 2009 meeting. The format order and wording for several strategies have been changed to follow the format and order in the technical report.

Revised Goal - ~~Improve the overall appearance of the County's urban and rural environment, Acknowledge the County's responsibility to be good stewards of the land by preserving and enhancing and preserve the County's~~ the scenic, cultural, rural, farm, forestal, natural, and historic qualities resources as being that are essential to the County's rural and historic small town character, economic vitality, and overall quality of life. **(Revision of original goal)**

Revised Strategy 1.1 - ~~Preserve and enhance entrance corridors and roads that promote the rural, natural, or historic character of the County.~~ **(New strategy brought forward per reformatting)**

- **Revised Action 1.1.3** - ~~Designate Community Character Corridors as wooded, urban and suburban, or open/agricultural. Create separate standards and tools for each of the different situations that may occur along Community Character Corridors, including standards and tools for protecting wooded areas, open/agricultural areas, scenic vistas, urban and suburban areas, and other areas as appropriate. Amend the Zoning Ordinance to reflect these standards. Consider amending the Zoning Ordinance to create overlay districts that would have requirements for landscaping and other aspects of design and that may include formal or informal mechanisms for architectural review.~~ **(Former Action 1.3.6)**
- **Revised Action 1.1.4** - ~~Continue to~~ Fund the underground utility escrow fund, with priority on Jamestown Road, John Tyler Highway, and portions of Richmond Road in Norge, Toano, and Lightfoot. **(Former Action 1.3.2)**
- **Revised Action 1.1.5** - ~~Create a program to~~ Recognize existing residential subdivisions and commercial properties that make beautification improvements, especially along high profile corridors of the County. **(Former Action 1.3.3)**
- **Revised Action 1.1.7**- ~~Continue to~~ Monitor the status of billboards throughout the County and pursue action, where possible, to ~~improve or~~ remove billboards using all currently available methods, and explore and pursue any new methods as they become available. **(Former Action 1.3.5)**
- **Revise Action 1.1.9** Preserve the character of rural roads by identifying roads that should be preserved, and work with VDOT to maintain their rural character while providing an acceptable level of safety. **(Former Action 1.6.5 combined with sub-actions)**

Revised Strategy 1.2- ~~Maintain the unique heritage and identity of designated Community Character Areas within the County.~~ **(New strategy brought forward per reformatting)**

- **Considered Revised Action** - *Seek the designation of Five Forks as a Community Character area.* (Staff considered this new action, but it was not brought forward as an action item because the Comprehensive Plan text and the Land Use Map will accomplish this.)

Revised Strategy 1.3- *Preserve and enhance neighborhood and community appearance.*
(New strategy brought forward per reformatting)

- **Revised Action 1.3.2-** *Continue to encourage conceptual plans for all subdivisions and developments required to have an approved site plan.* Adopt a conceptual plan process that provides early input from staff, and where appropriate, appointed or elected officials, to allow applicants to better assess critical issues with the goal of having a predictable and timely development plan approval process. **(Former Action 1.2.3)**
- **Revised Action 1.3.3-** *Continue to expect* Require illustrative drawings, including streetscapes, architecture, and perspectives as a binding component *of* for appropriate rezoning and special use permit applications. **(Former Action 1.2.4)**
- **Revised Action 1.3.4-** *Continue to* Update the Community Appearance Guide *regularly* prior to each Comprehensive Plan revision to include new examples of development and policy changes in the County. **(Former Action 1.2.5)**
- **Revised Action 1.3.5-** Ensure that all currently approved and new development blends carefully with the topography and surrounding vegetation, preserves unique formations, greenery, and scenic views, and uses sustainable plantings and building techniques. **(Former Strategy 1.5)**
- **Revised Action 1.3.6-** *Continue to* Require underground utilities in all new developments. *Continue to* Require screening and buffering of existing above-ground utilities and their placement below ground. **(Former Action 1.5.1)**
- **Revised Action 1.3.10-** *Encourage on-site lighting that enables the retention of the rural “dark sky” qualities of the County by promoting the use of cut-off and glare reducing fixtures and low intensity lighting. Adopt guidelines that identify recommended lighting designs that address a wide range of lighting applications.*
(Former deleted action brought back per committee and citizen comments. Staff research found areas of the ordinance that could be addressed. Currently only parking lot lighting is addressed and opportunity exists to address other areas if so desired.)
- **Deleted Action-** *Continue to require or encourage the planting of street/curbside trees, while ensuring flexibility for those subdivisions or developments which already provide adequate landscaping along streetscapes. Continue to review the placement of streetscape package locations for rezoning and special use permits to ensure that there is no conflict with utilities, and are placed close enough to the right of way to shade the street and create a canopy as intended.*
- **Deleted Action-** *Encourage nonresidential development to occur in compact mixed use or commercial centers which have their own internal road systems rather than spreading out along*

~~road corridors, and maintaining areas of natural open space and well buffered residential areas that visually and physically separate these centers.~~

Revised Strategy 1.4- *Preserve and create open space and greenways.*

(New strategy brought forward per reformatting)

- **Revised Action 1.4.1-** *Encourage development to occur within the Primary Service Area.* **(New action brought forward per reformatting)**
- **Revised Sub-action 1.4.2.2-** ~~Continue to~~ Fund the Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) program and encourage participation by landowners. *Consider acquiring land that is adjacent to other protected parcels to facilitate the creation of a green infrastructure.* **(Former Action 1.1.2)**
- **Revised Sub-action 1.4.2.3-** ~~Continue to~~ Fund the Capital Improvements Program (CIP) Greenspace Fund to acquire valuable open space lands. **(Former Action 1.1.3)**

Revised Strategy 1.5- *Preserve existing vegetation as possible and appropriate during development.*

(New strategy brought forward per reformatting)

- **Revised Action 1.5.1-** Ensure adequate code enforcement for the preservation of specimen trees and landscaping *during development as well as for the maintenance of landscaped areas and buffers after development has occurred.* **(Former Action 1.6.1)**
- **Revised Action 1.5.3-** ~~Continue to~~ Enforce existing tree preservation regulations and improve the methods the County uses *during the planning, pre-construction, construction and post construction phases* to make sure tree preservation measures are properly performed, resulting in healthier trees and buffers after development has occurred. **(Former Action 1.5.2)**
- **Considered New Action -** Staff was requested to forward an action that would require developments to use a phased site clearing technique. However after careful consideration it was decided that such an approach would not be an action item since current ordinances can already enact that in certain development scenarios.

Revised Strategy 1.6- *Identify and protect archaeological and historic sites.*

(New strategy brought forward per reformatting)

- **Revised Action 1.6.1-** ~~Request~~ **Require** archaeological studies for development proposals *requiring legislative approval* on lands identified by the James City County staff as warranting such study and require their recommendations to be implemented. In making the determination, staff will consult archaeological studies and seek the recommendation of representatives of the County Historical Commission or other qualified archaeologists if necessary. **(Former Action 1.6.2)**

- **Revised Action 1.6.2-** Continue to update the document “Preserving Our Hidden Heritage”. *Regularly Review the document prior to each Comprehensive Plan revision and perform a complete revision every ten years to include new site surveys.* (Former Action 1.6.3)
- **Revised Sub-action 1.6.3.2-** Registering all eligible sites in the Virginia Landmarks Register and the National Register of Historic Places *with the property owner’s consent.* (Former Sub-action 1.6.4.2)
- **Revised Sub-action 1.6.3.6-** Discouraging the demolition or inappropriate use of cultural and historic resources through *regulatory existing regulations* and voluntary techniques. (Former Sub-action 1.6.4.6)
- **Revised Action 1.7.1-** *Consider Revising Update* the Wireless Communications Division of the zoning ordinance to *encourage accommodate the use of new and emerging wireless communication services. Technologies that minimize visual impacts and improve service.* (Former Action 1.8.1)
- **Revised Action 1.7.2-** *Consider facilitating a study and master plan of existing wireless communication facilities, potential new sites, and the best available technology needed to serve the entire county*

Explore the feasibility of developing a wireless communications master plan to facilitate access to reliable and state of the art wireless communication services including cellular, wifi, emergency band, and other internet related wireless communications.
(Former Action 1.8.2)

Explanation of Amendments: Community Character Technical Report

Technical Report Text Amendments and Responses to General Questions:

The following details questions and comments from the Steering Committee and includes a summary on how each has been addressed within the Technical Report text or through other means.

2a. Types of Community Character Corridors and Guidelines

The Comprehensive Plan identified the three types of CCCs and appropriate guidelines, and the County shall explore designating Community Character Corridors through out the County as wooded, urban and suburban, or open/agricultural. Create separate standards and tools for each of the different situations that may occur along Community Character Corridors, including standards and tools for protecting wooded areas, open/agricultural areas, scenic vistas, urban and suburban areas, and other areas as appropriate.

◆ ***Suburban and Urban CCC***

A suburban or urban CCC is characterized as an area that has moderate to high traffic volumes, moderate to high levels of existing or planned commercial or moderate-density residential uses, and may contain some wooded buffer along roads. The objective of these CCCs is to ensure that

James City County retains a unique character and does not become simply another example of standard development. The predominant visual character of the suburban CCC should be the built environment and natural landscaping, with parking and other auto-related areas clearly a secondary component of the street scape. In urban CCCs landscaping should be more formal and the built environment and pedestrian and other streetscape amenities are dominant. Off-street parking should be a minor part of the streetscape. Development in urban and suburban CCCs should not replicate standardized designs commonly found in other communities, but rather reflect nearby historic structures, a sensitivity to the history of the County in general, and an emphasis on innovative design solutions. The scale and placement of buildings in relation to each other, the street, and parking areas should be compatible with the character. In these areas, the CCC designation would provide enhanced landscaping, preservation of specimen trees and shrubs, berming, and other desirable design elements which complement and enhance the visual quality of the urban corridor.

◆ **Wooded CCC**

A wooded CCC is characterized as an area that has natural wooded areas and vegetation along the road, low to moderate traffic volumes, and suburban or rural development patterns with minimal existing or planned commercial development. In these areas, a CCC designation would have as its main objective to fully screen development from the adjacent roadway by retention and enhancement of existing vegetation the full width of the buffer. The intended effects would be to protect development from the ills of traffic, to preserve open space and animal habitats, and to maintain the wooded and natural character of the County.

◆ **Open/Agricultural CCC**

An open/agricultural CCC is characterized as an area that is located primarily in rural areas where farming and forestal activities are predominant or are sought to be preserved. In these areas, the objective of the CCC designation is to preserve the views and integrity of farm fields and natural open spaces so that they remain dominant visual features.

2b. Designated Community Character Corridors

The following roads are designated CCCs in the 2003 Comprehensive Plan:

- ◆ Greensprings Road
- ◆ Monticello Avenue
- ◆ Jamestown Road
- ◆ John Tyler Highway
- ◆ Ironbound Road*
- ◆ Centerville Road
- ◆ Longhill Road
- ◆ Longhill Connector Road
- ◆ Forge Road
- ◆ Colonial Parkway
- ◆ Route 199

- ◆ News Road
- ◆ Riverview Road from Croaker Road to the entrance of York River State Park
- ◆ Sandy Bay Road from Ironbound Road to Jamestown Road
- ◆ Richmond Road (Route 60) from the New Kent County Line to Anderson’s Corner
- ◆ Pocahontas Trail (Route 60) south of Route 199 to the Newport News border
- ◆ Barhamsville Road (Route 30) from New Kent County Line to Anderson’s Corner
- ◆ *Richmond Road (Route 60) from Anderson’s Corner to the Williamsburg City Line*
 *A portion of Ironbound Road will be deleted as a Community Character Corridor

Using the successful Jamestown Corridor Enhancement Committee as a model, establish a Toano Enhancement Committee in partnership with the Friends of Forge Road and Toano and/or the Williamsburg Land Conservancy *or a similar community group*. Fund a matching grant program similar to that established for Jamestown Road.

- ◆ Ironbound Road
 - ~~Broadened~~ *Widen Road and create* median with large specimen trees in the manner of a linear town common.
 - Specific guidelines for public infrastructure and structures to ensure that the character and experience of the road reinforces the identity of New Town.

Utility Lines

Utility lines include electrical, natural gas, petroleum, water and sewer transmission, and communication lines. ~~Most~~ *Many* utilities are placed underground or are substantially screened for safety reasons and do not affect the character of the community in adverse ways.

9a. New Wireless Communication Facility Technologies

Due to the ever-changing field of wireless communications technology, the County needs to provide flexible and adaptive regulations for approving wireless communication facilities. One of the technologies being monitored uses multiple smaller linked antennas ~~to eliminate that y lessens~~ the need for large towers that can be intrusive to the landscape. Listed below are some of the benefits which this system can offer:

- ◆ Smaller less intrusive antennas
- ◆ Higher quality service
- ◆ Less dead zones
- ◆ Collocation of facilities

This system also has some disadvantages:

- ◆ Systems are not compatible with all situations; physical features such as topography can limit infrastructure installation.
- ◆ There are typically higher start-up costs due to infrastructure installation.
- ◆ A larger number of antennas are needed along with a back-up power source for each antenna.
- ◆ ~~There are consulting costs and other expenses needed to keep up with the newest technology needed.~~
- ◆ ~~Systems are mostly marketed to institutions such as college campuses, industrial parks, hospitals, and high rise buildings that have difficulty getting quality service.~~