

Charting the Course to 2040: The York County Comprehensive Plan

Timothy Cross, Deputy Director of Planning and Development Services, gave a presentation on the draft update of the Comprehensive Plan dated May 5, 2023. He stated that this document is the culmination of more than four years of work on the part of the Comprehensive Plan Review Steering Committee, which was chaired by Mr. King, and the Planning Division staff. He gave a brief summary of each of the eight Plan elements – including Broadband, Economic Development, Environment, Historic Resources, Housing, Public Facilities, Transportation, and Land Use – and he described the proposed changes to the future Land Use Map, most of which, he stated, were intended to reflect changes in land use and/or zoning since the adoption of the current Plan in 2013. Lastly, Mr. Cross reminded the Commissioners that a called work session to discuss the draft Plan is scheduled for June 22 at 7:00PM at the Yorktown Library.

Mr. Holroyd asked when the proposed Lightfoot area plan might be conducted.

Mr. Cross responded that the Board is expected to adopt the Plan before the end of the year and assuming the Plan is approved, the County would likely contract with a land use consultant to work on the area plan, so it could possibly take place as early as the next fiscal year.

Mr. Holroyd asked if there are any plans for a public forum and what would be required of the Commission to decide to hold one.

Mr. Cross responded that there are no plans for a public forum. He noted that there have already been six public forums, a citizen survey to collect scientifically reliable information about the attitudes and opinions of the citizens, and 34 Committee meetings that were open to the public and included time for citizen comments, so staff does not feel another forum would accomplish anything beyond what has already been done and tonight's public hearing.

Chair Leedom opened the public hearing.

Dale L Cupp, 22245 Cabin Point Road, Disputanta, Virginia, spoke as the owner of a 19-acre parcel located at 1403 George Washington Memorial Highway (Route 17) and former resident of York County of twenty years. He stated that his property is currently designated Economic Opportunity with a Mixed Use overlay designation that the draft Plan proposes to remove. He gave a brief history of the property, which surrounds the Pine Meadow vet clinic, and spoke of his difficulty selling the property because of a road connection to Route 17 that had been proposed at one time was never built, leaving him with no access to Route 17. Dr. Cupp asked the Commission to retain the Mixed Use overlay designation to provide flexibility that will make the property more marketable.

John Worley, 119 Aberfeldy Way, expressed support for Dr. Cupp's request to retain the Mixed Use overlay designation in the area bounded by Route 17, Commonwealth Drive, and Bethel Industrial Park. He stated that keeping this designation would provide for development that is compatible with that the Commonwealth Green mixed-use development and the Kiln Creek area. He stated that there is no need to eliminate the designation since all mixed-use developments must be approved by the Board of Supervisors, and the designation provides the flexibility needed to adapt to changing demographics and housing needs.

Richard Howell, 104 Horseshoe Drive, thanked everyone who worked on the Comprehensive Plan stating it is a huge document and a huge effort. He stated that short-term rentals are a significant and growing trend in the County that he feels is not adequately addressed in the Plan.

He stated that he feels the Plan needs to incorporate language, as some other localities have done in their Comprehensive Plans, specifying how the County will address this issue.

Tom Chamberlin, 270 Barlow Road, thanked the members of the Comprehensive Plan Review Steering Committee for all their efforts and that he had attended several of its meetings. He said overall it is a good plan but that he is concerned about the need for secondary road improvements and the lack of funding to address them. He said there should be a strategy for funding these improvements. As an example, he suggested that a specified percentage of the annual budget surpluses over the next five years be targeted toward secondary road improvements. Mr. Chamberlain noted that the Six-Year Secondary Road allocations recently approved by the Board of Supervisors include \$1.2 million and address only a single intersection, yet the County has allocated millions of dollars for the Riverwalk Restaurant renovation. He also expressed concern that there are no plans for another public forum.

Bradley Berrane, 1102 Dandy Loop Road, spoke in support of Dr. Cupp's request to retain the Mixed Use overlay designation on his property. He stated that his family owns the property between Dr. Cupp's property and Route 17 and that Dr. Cupp has been trying to sell his property for a long time, and he felt that the Mixed Use overlay designation will help him in that regard. He said that other areas of the County don't need the designation but that this particular area is sandwiched in an area near Newport News where there is a high population density and that he feels the best opportunity for Dr. Cupp to sell his property is to with the Mixed Use overlay designation in place.

Beverly Krams, 105 Church Street, stated that she lives in the Yorktown village and that her family has longstanding roots there. She expressed her opposition to proposed changes to the Yorktown waterfront that she feels are intended to promote tourism at the expense of preserving the historic character of the village. She noted that the stated purpose of the Yorktown Design Guidelines enacted in 2004 was to preserve and protect the historic character of Yorktown. Ms. Krams stated that proposed changes – such as the new dockmaster building, the docking of Princess Cruise line ships, changes to Water Street, a rooftop activity area at the Yorktown Beach Hotel, sidewalks, and streetlights – would alter the character of this historically significant town forever, converting the historic district into a modern tourist district.

Ron Struble, 205 Shady Bluff Point, said he is president of the Conserve York County Foundation. He thanked Mr. Cross, Mr. King, and the Steering Committee for their work on the Comprehensive Plan. He stated that he emailed a letter to the staff commenting on several aspects of the draft Plan, some of which have already been spoken about and don't need to be repeated. Mr. Struble asked the Commission to consider holding a public forum, similar to those held in September 2021 at Bruton High School and the Tabb Library, so the staff can present the Plan to the citizens and tell them what it contains. He also recommended that there be an executive summary so the citizens do not have to read the entire document, and he recommended that the Plan include a programmatic approach to promoting conservation that includes such things as land acquisition and purchase of development rights. Finally, he recommended that the plan include an objection to revalidate the entire Zoning Ordinance, which he believes is outdated.

Wayne Drewry, 111 Chismans Point Road, stated that he agrees with Ms. Krams' comments about Yorktown and that he is disappointed with changes that are causing the historic value of the town to rapidly degrade because of the push for tourism. He also stated that he agrees with Mr. Struble's comments about the need for a public forum to address the questions and comments of the citizens.

Alyssa Adams, 111 Smith Street, referenced the Economic Development element of the Plan. She stated that if a permanent pier is to be built to accommodate Princess Cruise line ships as that element states, locations other than Yorktown Watermen's Museum should be considered. Specifically, she mentioned the Goodwin Neck/Waterview area as one possibility since the Yorktown Power Station is shutting down and there is existing infrastructure including deep-water docking facilities. Ms. Adams expressed concern about the possible proliferation of large cruise ships in Yorktown if a permanent pier is established and the disruptive impact it would have on natural beauty and character of this small waterfront village, which she said does not have the infrastructure to support the large numbers of visitors that these cruise ships would generate.

Jesse Williams, 3328 West Franklin Street, Richmond, spoke on behalf of the owners of two parcels on Newman Road and Fenton Mill Road near the I-64 Lightfoot interchange that were originally purchased by his father and Mr. Jim Ukrop in 1974. He stated that they oppose the removal of the Mixed Use overlay designation from that area, noting that there have been unsuccessful attempts to develop the property and that the taxes have gone up considerably regardless. Lastly, he stated that the parcels are zoned Limited Business and that the owners want to preserve the options they have available with the Mixed Use overlay designation in place.

Curt Hovater, 105 Drewry Lane, stated that he feels the Comprehensive Plan is a good plan but that he doesn't think the local government should be involved in installing electric vehicle charging stations throughout the County, which he said should be left to the private market. He said unless the charging stations are maintained by Telsa, they would likely be broken in a couple of years.

There being no one else wishing to speak with regard to the draft Comprehensive Plan, **Chair Leedom** closed the public hearing.

Mr. King thanked the citizens for attending and said he appreciated the kind words and comments on the draft Comprehensive Plan. He said that at the June 22 work session, the Commission will take into the consideration the idea of a public forum and other citizen comments. He added that there will be more opportunities for public input before the process is over.

Mr. Holroyd stated he has read the plan three times and participated in a lot of the Committee meetings and has written down several points that have already been discussed, which include transportation, conservation, short-term rentals, the Mixed Use overlay designation, and land use. He said he believes there is a need for a public forum.

Mr. Cross stated that the Commission will discuss comments from tonight's meeting at the June 22 work session and asked the Commissioners to email him any specific topics or questions that need to be included in the discussion on Thursday.
