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# INTRODUCTION

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Caroline County is ideally located on Interstate 95 between Richmond and Washington. Our location gives us convenient access to Baltimore, the beaches and ports in Tidewater, and virtually the entire east coast. County residents can travel thirty minutes north or south and enjoy the cultural amenities of nearby urban areas without the problems associated with such areas.

Caroline is well situated to promote industrial and commercial development. Due to its location and convenient interstate and highway access, there are economic development opportunities that are vital to providing employment for residents as well as increasing the tax base to support the increase in population.

Our location also makes us attractive for residential development. Over the past eight years, population growth in Caroline County dramatically increased, resulting in the County having the sixteenth highest growth rate of all counties in Virginia. Much of this growth occurred in previously platted subdivisions over which the County has virtually no control. Approximately 84% of the County's growth during this decade is due to in-migration; that is people moving into the County.

*A Vision for Caroline-The 2030 Comprehensive Plan* is the County's guide or "blueprint" for future development, to ensure that development is accomplished in an orderly manner. Growth can be accomplished in a manner that maximizes the benefits to County residents and businesses, without negatively affecting the many attributes of the County.

## PLAN ORGANIZATION

*The 2030 Comprehensive Plan* contains ten chapters, which, together with other documents, will guide growth and development in the County over the next twenty years. Each of these components acknowledges development, while creating an attractive living environment for residents and retaining the unique features of the County.

In general, the plan evaluates the existing conditions and proposes actions to be taken over the next twenty years. Specific components of the plan include:

### LIFE IN CAROLINE COUNTY

This chapter gives a brief history of the County, its government, and the services provided by the departments and agencies of the County. It also examines characteristics of the County's population that give an insight into the residents who make up Caroline County.

### PLANNING HISTORY

This chapter provides the background for the planning process. It discusses the relationship of the plan to the requirements of the Commonwealth of Virginia, planning history, and the benefits of planning. It also discusses the development of other land development regulations and their relationship to the comprehensive plan. Finally, this chapter identifies important milestones in the planning history of the County.

### HOUSING

This chapter examines the population dynamics and population projections through the year 2030. It examines population trends and their impacts on housing in Caroline. The availability, affordability, condition and types of housing are discussed in relation to the history and location of the County. This chapter further identifies policies to address future housing needs.

## NATURAL RESOURCES

This chapter discusses the abundant natural resources in the County, the issues affecting those resources, and ways to manage them. This chapter examines the impacts of resources on development and conversely, the impacts of development on these resources, including; air, water, soils and soil characteristics, agricultural production and forestry. State and Federal regulations affecting the County are also discussed, including the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act, and the possible designation of the County as an Ozone Non-attainment Area. Finally, the County's environmental education program is discussed as an example of non regulatory efforts to encourage resource protection.

## CULTURAL AND HISTORIC RESOURCES

This section provides a detailed history of the County, and the events that helped to shape our County as it is today. It discusses private preservation efforts, identifies resources available to assist property owners, as well as efforts that still need to be undertaken to preserve additional resources.

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

This element identifies current economic conditions in the county. It also evaluates economic and business trends that impact the County's efforts to recruit new investment. An analysis of the County's strengths and weaknesses is undertaken, which provides the basis for a community economic development strategy. Finally, this chapter discusses the emerging Tourism program and it's potential.

## COMMUNITY FACILITIES

This section inventories the community facilities, including facilities owned by the County, or agencies supported by the County. These facilities include general government, public safety, public works, and schools. This chapter also provides a program of recommendations for reference in future Capital Improvements Programs.

## LAND USE

This section examines current land use patterns in Caroline and assesses the County's land development needs based on population projections. Furthermore, this element addresses the role of Smart Growth in future development decisions. It also presents overall development concepts, a future land use plan and specific projects designed to implement the plan. Finally, the area plans are discussed in detail, as well as the relationship to the overall plan.

## TRANSPORTATION

This section examines the components of the County's transportation system, and identifies the improvements necessary to accommodate growth. This chapter also discusses the different roles and responsibilities in constructing and maintaining the transportation system. Finally, the economic realities of funding transportation improvements are discussed.

## IMPLEMENTATION

This section summarizes the recommendations of the plan and offers a schedule for implementing the plan's components.

## A COMMUNITY RESOURCE

While this document serves as the County's Comprehensive Plan, and meets the statutory requirements of the Code of Virginia, it is intended to be more than a traditional comprehensive plan. It is our desire that this document be a community resource for citizens, businesses, industries, visitors, and even those with just a casual interest in the County and its history. This document provides insight into the state and federal regulations that affect the county. It also provides links to federal, state and local agencies where one can go to obtain additional information on the topics contained in this document or other similar information. This document is not intended to be viewed once and placed on a shelf to be revisited once every five years. We encourage you to view this document often.

