



# City of Lewisburg

## Comprehensive Plan

### Update

*Final Draft: September 2015*

*Chapter 1: Introduction*



# City of Lewisburg Comprehensive Plan

## *Land Use Planning*

Land use planning is when a municipality plans for future growth and development. Planning can be done in a variety of methods, many of which Lewisburg has undertaken. A Planning Commission was formed to spearhead planning efforts.

In 1994, the city enacted zoning and subdivision regulations to help protect the historical and scenic qualities that residents cherish. The City adopted its first ever comprehensive plan in 2003. In 2004, the city enacted the international building code. In 2005, the City enacted historic district guidelines to protect the historic district from negative impacts of new development.

## *Comprehensive Planning*

A comprehensive plan is a tool that communities can use to make informed land use decisions. The plan should ultimately guide investments to the right places. The term comprehensive is used because the plan looks at all facets of a community; land use, transportation, housing, economic development, recreation, and community services.

The Planning Commission recognizes that the comprehensive plan should not be a static document. Therefore, the city initiated a comprehensive plan update to determine new trends and needs of residents. The update will not reinvent the wheel but build upon previous planning efforts. As part of the update, the 2003 plan was reviewed and recommendations from that plan were analyzed to determine if they were implemented and if not, determine the obstacles to implementation.

The plan should be used by all elected officials in Lewisburg. The plan should be referenced any time officials make a decision about a development proposal, capital improvement project, or policy change. Official actions should be consistent with the vision and goals laid out in the comprehensive plan.





# Chapter 1: Introduction

One of the most important functions of a comprehensive plan is its use during review of development proposals and zoning changes. City council, the planning commission, and the board of zoning appeals should review the plan to ensure any new development or proposed zoning changes are consistent with the comprehensive plan. Questions that officials should ask when reviewing new development include:

- \* Is the new development/zoning change consistent with the Future Land Use Map?
- \* How will the development impact the transportation network?
- \* Will the development lead to an increase in the number of school children that could potentially impact the county school district?
- \* Will additional housing be needed?

## *Public Input*

As the purpose of a comprehensive plan is to establish a vision for the future, the opinion of the public was essential during the planning process. The City of Lewisburg hosted two public open houses, four stakeholder forums, and developed several online surveys in order to receive as much input as possible. The planning commission meetings were also open to the public. Several local high school students attended a planning commission meeting and participated in a visioning exercise for the comprehensive plan.

The West Virginia Code requires that the Planning Commission give notice and hold a public hearing before recommending a comprehensive plan to the governing body. After the public hearing and approval, the planning commission submitted the recommended plan to City Council. City Council then held a public hearing prior to adoption of the plan. The Planning Commission is also required to adopt procedures for public participation. The procedures adopted by the City of Lewisburg Planning Commission can be found in Appendix 1.

## *Open Houses*

Two open houses were held throughout the planning process. The first was held in January of 2014 and served as an introduction to the public of the comprehensive plan project. Meeting attendees were asked to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats in the City.

A final open house was held in April of 2015 to present the action plan to the public. The public prioritized the recommendations at the meeting and the results were then presented to the Planning Commission. The results assisted the commission in drafting the final implementation matrix. Results from the open house can be found in Appendix 2.



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## Public Surveys

Other opportunities for public input included surveys that were posted online. Copies of the initial survey were also available at City Hall. The Planning Commission hoped that additional input would be received from online surveys since some people will not attend public meetings.

A survey of college students was also publicized to solicit input from students attending the West Virginia School of Osteopathic Medicine and the New River Community and Technical College. A total of 55 students participated in the online survey.

A summary of the results of each survey can be found in Appendix 3.

## Stakeholder Forums/Interviews

Stakeholder forums were held with the New River Community and Technical College, the West Virginia School of Osteopathic Medicine, Merchants of Downtown Lewisburg, and the Shepherd Center. At the forums stakeholders were asked to participate in a SWOT (Strengths, Weakness, Opportunities, and Threats) exercise.

Stakeholder questionnaires were sent to other various stakeholders including the public works, police and fire departments, a local relator, Greenbrier County Convention and Visitors Bureau, and the Greenbrier Historical Society.

## Critical Issues and Plan Organization

The update to the Comprehensive Plan revolves around key issues and needs that were identified during the planning process. A total of seven (7) needs were identified and are discussed in various chapters in the plan.

## Vision Statement

The creation of a vision statement is essential in the comprehensive planning process. The statement serves to help describe the aspirations for the future in the City of Lewisburg. The statement will help guide the city in how they should develop and plan in the next ten years.

## Goals

Using the information derived from the public input process and once a vision was established, the Planning Commission then developed goals to reflect the critical issues and concerns of residents.

Chapter 2: Transportation

Chapter 3: Recreation

Chapter 4: Economic Development

Chapter 5: Downtown enhancement

Chapter 6: Sustainability

Chapter 7: Land Use

# Chapter 1: Introduction



## Vision Statement

*The City of Lewisburg celebrates its arts, culture, and historical character while providing high quality community services for residents, businesses, and visitors. The city strives to provide an excellent quality of life through improved amenities in order to attract new residents and ensure that existing residents of all ages continue to call Lewisburg home.*

Goal 1: Preserve and promote the historical, cultural, and educational assets of Lewisburg

Goal 2: Enhance Downtown Lewisburg as a vibrant community center, viewed as a destination for residents of Lewisburg and Greenbrier County as well as visitors from throughout West Virginia and beyond

Goal 3: Promote balanced development, economic growth and appropriate housing choices that complement the existing city character and adequately reflect the needs of the changing population

Goal 4: Provide a safe and efficient transportation system that accommodates pedestrians, bicycles, automobiles, and public transit users

Goal 5: Expand and improve recreational opportunities and facilities for residents and visitors of Lewisburg

Goal 6: Conduct governmental functions in a sustainable manner and encourage sustainability within the community



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## Chapter 8A Land Use Planning

The West Virginia Code, Chapter 8A: Land Use Planning sets the rules and regulations that local governments must follow when participating in land use planning efforts. Chapter 8A gives local governments the authority to create a planning commission and board of zoning appeals, develop a comprehensive plan, subdivision and land development ordinance, zoning ordinance, and enact a voluntary farmland protection program, as well as to set procedures for methods of securities, appeals, and enforcement of ordinances.

Chapter 8A, Article 3 also details required elements of a comprehensive plan. The tables on the following pages direct readers where they can read the mandatory elements in the plan.

### *Required Objectives for a Comprehensive Plan*

*W. VA. Code § 8A-3-4*

Code Provision	Chapter
Statement of goals and objectives	Chapters 1-8
Timeline on how to meet short and long-term goals and objectives	Chapter 8
Action plan with implementation strategies	Chapters 2-7
Recommendations of a financial program for necessary public funding	Chapters 8
Statement of recommendations concerning future land use	Chapter 7
A program to encourage regional planning, coordination, and cooperation	Chapter 8
Maps, plats, and/or charts that present basic information on the land, including present and future uses	Chapter 7



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## Required Components for a Comprehensive Plan

### W. VA. Code § 8A-3-4

Code Provision	Page #
<i>Land Use</i>	
Different land uses (including, for example, residential, agricultural, historic, conservation	7-2
Population density and building intensity standards	4-2, 7-2
Growth or decline management	4-2, 4-3, 7-13
Projected population growth or decline	4-2, 4-3
Constraints on development (including identifying flood-prone and subsidence areas)	7-3
<i>Housing</i>	
Analyze projected housing needs and different types of housing needed (including affordable housing and accessible housing for persons with disabilities)	7-10, 7-11, 7-14
Identify the number of projected housing units and land needed	7-11, 7-12, 7-13
Address substandard housing	7-11
Rehabilitate and improve existing housing	7-14
Adaptive reuse of buildings into housing	7-11
<i>Transportation</i>	
Vehicular, transit, air, port, railroad, river, and any other mode	2-2, 2-4, 2-10
Movement of traffic and parking	2-2, 2-3, 2-5, 2-6, 2-8
Pedestrian and bicycle systems	2-3, 2-6, 2-7, 2-9, 6-6
Intermodal transportation	2-2- 2-10
<i>Economic Development</i>	
Analyze opportunities, strengths and weaknesses	4-7, 4-8, 4-9
Identify and designate economic development sites and/or sectors	4-7, 4-8, 4-9
Identify types of economic development sought	4-7, 4-8, 4-9
<i>Miscellaneous Components</i>	
Infrastructure	4-7, 4-9, 7-12
Public Services	4-7, 5-2, 5-3, 8-2
Rural	7-13
Recreation	3-2- 3-8
Community Design	5-4, 5-6, 5-8
Preferred Development Areas	7-10
Renewal and/or redevelopment	7-10
Financing	8-2-8-7
Historic Preservation	7-8, 7-9, 7-12, 7-15