

GROWTH MANAGEMENT POLICIES

INTRODUCTION

Communities and their rural environs evolve...they do not leap in finished form from the plans of planners, the programs of environmentalists or the plats of developers. The landscape of Shenandoah County twenty years from now will be the result of the collective group of interested residents, the elected representatives, and outside factors which influence the County. To formulate a meaningful set of goals and policies, we must have a clear vision of where we want to go. As a starting point, the next sub-section describes Shenandoah County twenty years from now based on a consensus of popular aspirations and a realistic projection of current socio-economic trends.

SHENANDOAH COUNTY 2010 - "THE VISION"

Shenandoah County, Virginia lies at the heart of the I-81 growth corridor between Hagerstown, Maryland and Staunton, Virginia. It offers a unique alternative life style to the megalopolis that characterizes much of the Mid-Atlantic section of the United States today. Over the last twenty-five years it has experienced steady, moderate population growth, yet has generally maintained its traditional rural landscape. At least 85 percent of the County is forested or in agricultural usages. Seven compact towns and villages lie along the historic Valley Turnpike (U.S. Route 11). A diverse and thriving economic base and predominantly middle class population have ameliorated many of the socio-economic ills that plague several other parts of the Mid-Atlantic. Shenandoah County residents and visitors alike have always appreciated their quality of life. Today, it is obvious that this quality of life is better than ever.

The landscape of Shenandoah County is highly influenced by Mother Nature, traditional Germanic settlement patterns and historical transportation routes. The mountain ridges and primary roads all run in a northeast-southwest direction. Two sparsely populated valleys--Cedar Creek and Fort--define the western and eastern flanks of the County, respectively. The Little North and Massanutten mountain ranges are almost entirely forested. The central Shenandoah River Valley (North Fork) has a relatively high rural population density for Virginia because of the Germanic origins of its settlers, but still has a very open, agricultural feeling.

The towns and villages are compact and focus on historic districts which contain two hundred year old plus architecture. Seven of these towns and villages cluster in a line along U.S. Route 11 and Interstate 81. Much of the northern top of the County is within the Shenandoah County National Battlefield Park, but is protected by an overlay zone, not public ownership. The New Market Battlefield, in the southern tip of the County, is owned by the

Virginia Military Institute. A water conservation-open space system created by an overlay zone over the County's river, streams, and wetlands ties the north-south axis of the Shenandoah River with the east-west axis of its tributary streams.

Over the last twenty years, the citizens have utilized the capital and energy created by steady population and economic growth to improve on their heritage. Agriculture--in particular capital-intensive specialized agriculture--was encouraged and actively promoted by government and the general public. Shenandoah County is now a nationally recognized location for farmstead gourmet food/beverage production. Poultry and fish farming are extremely important economic activities. New residents who were not interested in agricultural life styles have tended to locate in urbanized areas, either in restored historic buildings or in compact developments which have urban utilities and services. Only non-polluting industries are recruited into the County. Strict water and air pollution regulations have been enforced with new and old industry alike. Several community facilities such as libraries, schools, and teen centers have been constructed to correct past deficiencies. All of these are networked with activities at the Shenandoah Armory, which functions as a county-wide civic center. The "good life" enjoyed by Shenandoah Valley residents for two hundred and fifty years continues on into the Twenty-first Century.

PLANNING POLICIES

A policy is a written statement intended to guide decisions and activities. Policy statements are expressed at different levels of detail: 1) general overall goals, 2) objectives or principles that further define those goals within various categories, and 3) strategies which set forth specific activities for implementation.

A goal is a broad statement of a future ideal considered desirable for the County. It is a clear and concise statement of the vision of the future of Shenandoah County.

Objectives or principles describe ideas or concepts which can be used to accomplish a goal. They are more specific in terms of the types of activities needed to achieve a particular category of goals (e.g. environmental objectives, economic principles).

Strategies are specific activities to be accomplished which will implement the goals and objectives of the plan. They are based on the facts and evidence generated throughout the planning process and used in establishing the principles or objectives.

The comprehensive planning process is dynamic. As new data is generated and trends are established, changes need to be made to the plan. While the strategies may change often (as they are accomplished or conditions change), the principles or objectives will change less often, and the general goals will not change until they have been met.

The adopted goals and objectives for Shenandoah County follow. A Generalized Future Land Use map appears at the end of this section as Figure 9-A. Section 10 of the plan focuses on implementation recommendations for the period of 1990 to 1995.

GENERAL DEVELOPMENT GOALS

The following goals are broad policies that the Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors will apply in making decisions affecting the County's growth through the year 2010. The specific objectives and strategies were drawn from the general goals, and from the information contained in Sections 1 through 8 of this plan:

- GOAL 1 - Retain the rural and open-space character of the unincorporated area of the County.
- GOAL 2 - Preserve and enhance the environmental quality and historic features of the County and its quality of life.
- GOAL 3 - Guide, and direct growth into and around the towns and areas served by the road network and other public facilities, while preserving the rural and open space character of those areas outside of public service areas.
- GOAL 4 - Encourage the concentration of economic development within the public service areas.
- GOAL 5 - Promote affordable housing for all segments of the population, particularly for semi-skilled and unskilled workers.
- GOAL 6 - Provide for the improvement of the road network and other public facilities and for the delivery of necessary public services consistent with these goals.
- GOAL 7 - Integrate transportation planning with land use planning.

GENERAL DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES

OBJECTIVE A - Provide a framework for the orderly growth of the County, within which the demands for residential, commercial, public and other land uses can be accommodated in a harmonious manner.

OBJECTIVE B - Provide a basis for designing and programming new public facilities

OBJECTIVE C - Encourage environmentally sound economic development in agriculture, industry, public facilities, and services.

OBJECTIVE D - Provide for a continuing planning process through which the needs and desires of the citizenry will be constantly reflected and realized.

OBJECTIVE E - Coordinate planning with the Lord Fairfax Planning District Commission and citizen advisory groups to insure that the County plan is consistent with stated goals.

GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES
FOR INDIVIDUAL PLAN CATEGORIES

1. REGIONAL SETTING & HISTORY

GOAL 8 - Protect the historic resources in Shenandoah County.

OBJECTIVE A - Preserve individual properties and sites throughout the county.

STRATEGY 1) - Encourage completion of historic surveys and nomination of eligible properties to the Virginia and National registers.

STRATEGY 2) - Require all development proposals to identify historic and prehistoric features.

STRATEGY 3) - Seek funding for rural historical preservation.

STRATEGY 4) - Encourage the use of donated easements to permanently protect buildings and sites.

OBJECTIVE B - Protect and enhance battlefield sites throughout the County.

STRATEGY 1) - Support the goals of the National Park Service study which identified four Civil War battlefield sites in the County.

STRATEGY 2) - Encourage the use of donated easements and other voluntary measures to permanently protect these sites.

2. NATURAL RESOURCES

GOAL 9 - Preserve and enhance the natural environment of Shenandoah County.

OBJECTIVE A - Protect the natural environment from damage due to development activity.

STRATEGY 1) - Protect the natural resources and respect development limitations of slope, soils, geology, and water availability.

STRATEGY 2) - Maintain agricultural and forestal lands for their contribution to the economic base and environmental quality.

OBJECTIVE B - Provide for development according to the carrying capacity of the environment.

STRATEGY 1) - Limit development in areas identified as having high potential for groundwater pollution; protect sinkholes

STRATEGY 2) - Limit density in areas which are identified as critical areas for septic systems.

OBJECTIVE C - Preserve and protect the Shenandoah River, other streams, and the County's ground water

STRATEGY 1) - Regulate development in flood plains.

STRATEGY 2) - Develop a groundwater protection strategy for the County.

STRATEGY 3) - Identify priority watersheds; identify and protect high quality streams and wetland areas.

STRATEGY 4) - Assist towns and other public water suppliers in protecting public water supplies, including wellheads and aquifer recharge areas.

STRATEGY 5) - Protect wetlands and sinkholes.

OBJECTIVE D - Require industrial compliance with environmental standards.

STRATEGY 1) - Support State agency implementation of environmental standards.

STRATEGY 2) - Provide for review of industrial proposals by State environmental agencies.

STRATEGY 3) - Include performance requirements in zoning and site plan regulations for industry.

3. LAND USE

GOAL 10 - Guide and direct growth into and around the towns and public service areas, while preserving the rural and open space character of the balance of the County.

OBJECTIVE A - Guide major development to locate in and around the towns and utility service areas.

STRATEGY 1) - Coordinate County zoning in adjacent areas around towns with zoning in the towns.

STRATEGY 2) - Identify potential public service areas and seek annexation agreements with towns to define those areas.

STRATEGY 3) - Encourage uniform town subdivision regulations.

OBJECTIVE B - Maintain the rural character of areas outside of the public service areas.

STRATEGY 1) - Confine urban forms of land development to the public service areas.

STRATEGY 2) - Encourage the use of Best Management Practices in agricultural and forestal areas.

STRATEGY 3) - Protect existing farming operations from premature or speculative development.

STRATEGY 4) - Provide for the orderly expansion of urban development into territory surrounding incorporated areas within the County while discouraging the scattering of residential, commercial, and industrial uses into the agricultural areas.

STRATEGY 5) - Maintain a low average density of dwelling units and businesses in agricultural and conservation areas.

STRATEGY 6) - Assure adequate protection for farming in zoning ordinances.

STRATEGY 7) - Encourage agricultural districts in order to utilize Use Value Taxation.

STRATEGY 8) - Consider the implementation of a land evaluation and site assessment (LESA) system for agricultural lands.

GROWTH MANAGEMENT

STRATEGY 9) - Use zoning to avoid the encroachment of residential use on agricultural uses.

STRATEGY 10) - Consider the implementation of sliding scale zoning where it fosters achievement of overall plan goals and objectives.

STRATEGY 11) - Encourage the use of agricultural, scenic, historic and other voluntary easements to permanently preserve land.

OBJECTIVE C - Guide future commercial land uses to locate where there is access to major transportation corridors and public utility services are or can be made available.

STRATEGY 1) - Consider locations carefully when evaluating rezoning requests.

STRATEGY 2) - Provide for adequate access and for avoiding congestion along roadways.

STRATEGY 3) - Coordinate placement of utilities with developers and the towns/service authorities.

STRATEGY 4) - Establish adequate buffer zones between residential and commercial and industrial areas to maintain property values and physical attractiveness.

OBJECTIVE D - Guide future limited industrial land uses to locate near the interstate corridor and interchanges where public utility services are or can be made available and adequate transportation facilities exist:

STRATEGY 1) - Provide a limited industrial classification in the zoning ordinance

STRATEGY 2) - Provide for adequate access and for avoiding congestion along roadways, accommodating safe and efficient movement of people and goods.

STRATEGY 3) - Coordinate placement of utilities with developers and the towns/service authorities.

STRATEGY 4) - Utilize interstate frontage for maximum value uses at interchanges where services can be provided; keep open space uses along interstate and other frontages to promote tourism and preserve historic areas.

STRATEGY 5) - Encourage light, high-tech, non-polluting industry that will benefit the economy and ecology of the County.

STRATEGY 6) - Promote industrial uses in "park" settings with adequate distance and aesthetic qualities in relation to neighboring uses and roadways.

STRATEGY 7) - Prohibit obnoxious, nuisance-type industries from all areas of the County.

4. ECONOMY

GOAL 11 - Support a business climate conducive to economic activity and encourage a diversity of business and industry in the County.

OBJECTIVE A - Encourage the development of existing and new commercial and industrial activities.

STRATEGY 1) - Continue in the Virginia Certification Program; meet re-certification requirements.

STRATEGY 2) - Emphasize the recruitment of higher wage industries and high capital investment.

OBJECTIVE B - Support travel and tourist related activities.

STRATEGY 1) - Promote tourism; encourage the protection of historic sites and recreational facilities.

OBJECTIVE C - Carefully locate business and industrial areas.

STRATEGY 1) - Encourage the concentration of economic development within the public service areas.

STRATEGY 2) - Group highway commercial/industrial services in selected locations.

OBJECTIVE D - Maintain and expand the role of agriculture as part of the basic economy of the County:

STRATEGY 1) - Provide the means to preserve agricultural land through tax policies, regulations, and support for private actions.

STRATEGY 2) - Encourage diversity in agricultural production.

STRATEGY 3) - Encourage better marketing of agricultural products.

5. POPULATION

GOAL 12 - The County's population will grow at a low to moderate rate, and this growth will not be scattered throughout the countryside.

OBJECTIVE A - Monitor growth trends.

STRATEGY 1) - analyze detailed 1990 Census data when available and incorporate it into the Plan.

OBJECTIVE B - Guide the majority of growth to the public service areas.

STRATEGY 1) - Strive for a balanced distribution of population by age group.

STRATEGY 2) - Maintain a low to moderate rate of population growth.

STRATEGY 3) - Concentrate population growth in areas served by central facilities.

6. HOUSING

GOAL 13 - Provide for a wide variety of housing opportunities and types within the County

OBJECTIVE A - Provide for a variety of housing types and locations.

STRATEGY 1) - Promote equal housing opportunity for all.

STRATEGY 2) - Encourage the creation of quality housing through land use ordinances.

OBJECTIVE B - Reduce the cost of providing housing and public facilities.

STRATEGY 1) - Provide for a range of housing types and styles consistent with a town/rural environment and local incomes.

STRATEGY 2) - Encourage maintenance of the existing housing stock with rehabilitation and historic preservation activities as appropriate.

OBJECTIVE C - Encourage energy efficient housing types and patterns.

STRATEGY 1) - Guide residential development to locate in proximity to good transportation access; near the major retail shopping areas and major employment centers; and in areas with public services such as water and sewer, fire, and police protection.

7. COMMUNITY FACILITIES

GOAL 14 - Provide a basis for designing and programming new public facilities.

OBJECTIVE A - Provide adequate services and facilities to serve planned land uses and development.

STRATEGY 1) - Delineate service areas around towns and phase development within those service areas consistent with the availability of services.

STRATEGY 2) - Infrastructure that is required for developments requires financial participation by the developers.

STRATEGY 3) - Improve the County's school facilities and curriculum.

OBJECTIVE B - Contribute to the needs of the community with parks and recreation facilities for citizens of all ages.

STRATEGY 1) - Continue to develop the County's regional and town parks.

STRATEGY 2) - Insure that all appropriate recreational facilities are provided.

STRATEGY 3) - Provide recreational programs and activities.

OBJECTIVE C - Improve the capability for fire and rescue service dispatching and response.

STRATEGY 1) - Complete the implementation of county-wide road naming and house numbering.

STRATEGY 2) - Install enhanced 911 service.

OBJECTIVE D - - Comply with state and federal requirements for the disposal of solid waste:

STRATEGY 1) - Promote recycling and waste-minimization efforts; develop and implement a county-wide recycling program.

STRATEGY 2) - Promote regional cooperation on solid waste disposal issues.

STRATEGY 3) - Participate in regional solid waste planning and encourage towns to do the same.

OBJECTIVE E - Implement capital projects through Capital Improvements Programs (CIPs):

STRATEGY 1) - Conduct a fiscal analysis of trends in County revenues and expenditures to determine relative fiscal capacity for expanded services and capital projects.

STRATEGY 2) - Maintain a County CIP as part of the budget process.

STRATEGY 3) - Encourage all towns and other county service agencies to have capital improvement programs.

8. TRANSPORTATION

GOAL 15 - Provide a safe and efficient transportation system throughout the County.

OBJECTIVE A - Integrate transportation planning with land use planning.

STRATEGY 1) - Coordinate land use planning and decisions with transportation planning.

OBJECTIVE B - Improve the secondary road system in the County by encouraging the Department of Transportation to adopt the following strategies:

STRATEGY 1) - Widen rights-of-way and roadways where necessary.

STRATEGY 2) - Improve roadway surfaces.

STRATEGY 3) - Develop better drainage along roads.

STRATEGY 4) - Upgrade subdivision road standards.

OBJECTIVE C - Improve access to I-81 and the primary highway system.

STRATEGY 1) - Reduce congestion and increase capacity at interstate interchanges through reconstruction and transportation system management measures.

STRATEGY 2) - Prevent capacity from deteriorating as additional commercial development proceeds; provide for a rigorous review of proposed projects and determination of traffic measures needed.

STRATEGY 3) - Require traffic impact analyses for larger developments.

STRATEGY 4) - Support improvements to the Interstate highway system in Shenandoah County.

OBJECTIVE D - Encourage the provision of a full range of transportation options.

STRATEGY 1) - Provide for adequate and safe pedestrian and bicycle travel.

STRATEGY 2) - Encourage public transportation initiatives by the private sector.

STRATEGY 2) - Support regional airport service.

9. GROWTH MANAGEMENT POLICIES

GOAL 16 - Provide for a continuous comprehensive process which results in policies to manage the County's growth and development.

OBJECTIVE A - Maintain the Comprehensive Plan process to implement the Generalized Future Land Use map - Figure 9-A - which presents a composite of recommended plan amendments:

STRATEGY 1) - Conduct a complete plan review in 1995, 2000, and 2005.

STRATEGY 2) - Prepare updates to individual sections, if required, on a more frequent basis.

STRATEGY 3) - Conduct special planning studies as conditions warrant.

STRATEGY 4) - Review and update the Implementation section annually as part of the County budget process.

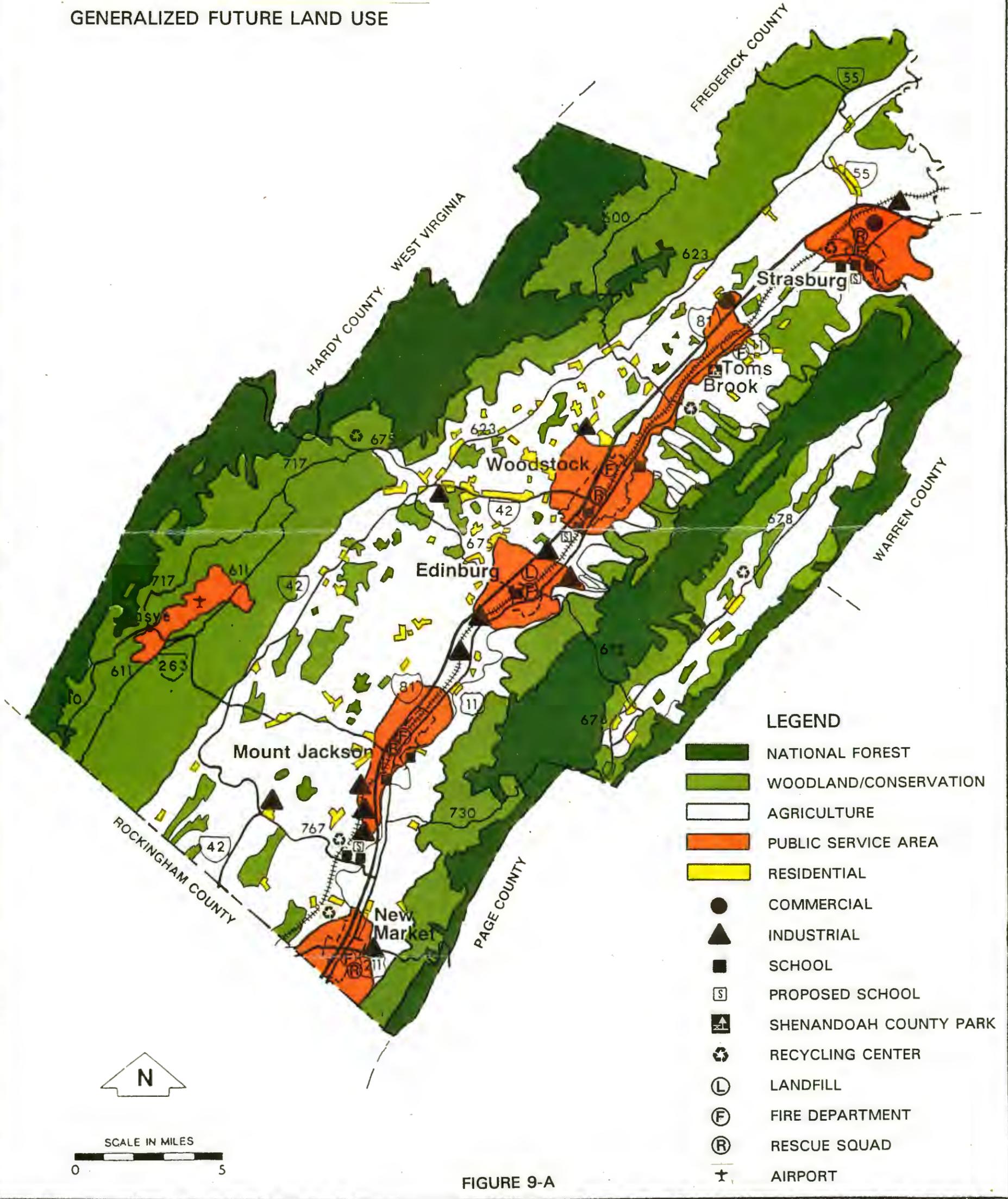
OBJECTIVE B - Provide for adequate personnel and financial resources to manage future growth.

STRATEGY 1) - Provide staffing as required to assure effective plan analysis and implementation.

STRATEGY 2) - Update fees charged for development reviews to fully cover costs.

SHENANDOAH COUNTY VIRGINIA

GENERALIZED FUTURE LAND USE



LEGEND

- NATIONAL FOREST
- WOODLAND/CONSERVATION
- AGRICULTURE
- PUBLIC SERVICE AREA
- RESIDENTIAL
- COMMERCIAL
- INDUSTRIAL
- SCHOOL
- S PROPOSED SCHOOL
- A SHENANDOAH COUNTY PARK
- ♻️ RECYCLING CENTER
- L LANDFILL
- F FIRE DEPARTMENT
- R RESCUE SQUAD
- ✈️ AIRPORT



FIGURE 9-A