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CITY OF OAK HILL

UPDATE TO THE 1968 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

REVISED FINAL DRAFT ~ MAY 18, 2012

ADOPTED: _____

SIGNED: _____

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.A Overview

West Virginia cities and counties are authorized by State Code Chapter 8A, Article 3 to prepare a comprehensive plan to "guide a governing body to accomplish a coordinated and compatible development of land and improvements within its territorial jurisdiction."

In addition to setting goals for land development, a comprehensive plan strives to accomplish a number of ideal factors for positive change including the:

- *Coordination of all governing bodies.*
- *Protection of natural, physical, financial, and human resources.*
- *Preservation of historic and scenic sites.*
- *Efficient utilization of agricultural and rural land.*

The plan must also promote a sense of community, character, and identity, while creating conditions that are favorable to health, safety, prosperity, transportation, recreation, and educational opportunities.

Oak Hill's comprehensive plan update is a policy guide for the Planning & Zoning Commission and the City Council as they consider issues that affect the land and its resources, balanced against the ever-changing needs of the City's businesses and residents. Plan policies and recommendations are to be implemented over time and as resources become available. The Oak Hill Comprehensive Plan is being updated to ensure that future land use decisions are made in a coordinated and responsible manner that capitalizes on the City's assets and improves the standard of living for residents and businesses.

The Oak Hill City Council, with the guidance of the Oak Hill Planning & Zoning Commission, engaged in a planning process that included studies of existing conditions, plans for future highway and local road improvements, and input from the community. Recognizing the magnitude of this undertaking, as well as the fact that this was the first update for the Planning & Zoning Commission since 1968, the City Council sought the services of a planning consultant to assist with the preparation of the update of the Comprehensive Plan for the City of Oak Hill.

1.B Purpose of a Comprehensive Plan

The purpose of the Oak Hill Comprehensive Plan is to provide long-term guidance for decisions about the future of Oak Hill. This Plan addresses key issues identified by the Oak Hill Planning Commission; including land use, population density, traffic flow, commercial, and residential building status and infrastructure.

The Comprehensive Plan is intended to be the guide for decisions regarding development and growth over the next ten years based on anticipated changes in the population, business development, land use, and traffic patterns. It should be used as a basis for intelligent discussions by the public and its elected representatives on the future development of Oak Hill. The Plan should also be used to evaluate the merits of future development against the community's goals.

The Comprehensive Plan will represent the framework for decision-making in Oak Hill, yet be flexible enough to allow for changes in the local and regional economy that may affect the evolution of the City. To be used, the plan must be accepted, understood, and supported by the elected officials, decision-makers, and the citizens of the community. By adopting such a plan, decisions will be made, monies will be spent, and programs will be initiated which can be implemented in an enlightened and rational manner.

1.C The Need to Update the Comprehensive Plan

Oak Hill adopted its last comprehensive plan in 1968 to establish a planning framework within which the various, and occasionally conflicting, activities and objectives of Oak Hill and Fayette County could co-exist, while providing logical and farsighted guidance for the future.

Since the adoption of the 1968 Comprehensive Plan, transportation improvements have facilitated commerce and commuting between the primary population centers of Fayette County as well as further identifying the gateway into the County from the north and south. Fayette County has also seen expanding communities in areas such as Fayetteville and Mount Hope, triggering the need for discussions about where growth should occur over the next twenty years. This growth has also spurred discussions on the development of, and along, our County's major transportation corridors.

In addition to the work that has been done locally, changes in the regional, national, and global economy have resulted in a heightened need to diversify the local economy. This update to the Comprehensive Plan will ensure that the Planning & Zoning Commission and City Council continue to make decisions that allow for the area's growth and change while preserving the City's values and quality of life.

1.D The Planning Process

Under the West Virginia State Code the Planning & Zoning Commission is responsible for the development of a comprehensive plan. The development of a plan is more successful when the Planning & Zoning Commission and the legislative body work cooperatively. Public meetings and other forms of citizen participation are encouraged to ensure that the goals of the plan truly reflect the desires of the community.

When a comprehensive plan is developed or revised, the Planning & Zoning Commission is required to prepare or revise any land development regulations that will implement the plan. The Planning & Zoning Commission also has the authority to hold a public hearing on amendments to the subdivision regulations.

The Planning & Zoning Commission and City Council may choose to proceed with the adoption of the Comprehensive Plan first and then proceed with the adoption of the any implementing measures or, they may choose to adopt the Comprehensive Plan and any implementing measures simultaneously.

Upon completion of the final draft of a new or updated Comprehensive Plan, and before recommending adoption of the same to the City Council, the Planning & Zoning Commission must hold at least one public hearing. Notice of the time and place must be given by one publication in a newspaper of general circulation in the jurisdiction. Approval of the Comprehensive Plan by the Planning & Zoning Commission must be by a majority of affirmative votes. The Planning & Zoning Commission will then refer the recommended draft of the Comprehensive Plan to the City Council for adoption.

The City Council must hold a public hearing on the recommended draft of the Comprehensive Plan. The City Council is then responsible for the adoption of the Comprehensive Plan. The Comprehensive Plan and

associated implementation measures then become effective (law) once a resolution, the Comprehensive Plan, and any associated maps have been signed by the members of the legislative body.

CHAPTER TWO – THE PLAN

2.A Land Use

Goal

The goals of the Land Use Section are: 1) to promote logical, efficient, and well-organized land use patterns that reduce conflicts among uses; 2) to guide and promote attractive, sustainable growth; and 3) to balance environmental sustainability and commercial growth by emphasizing the important role the environment will play in the future of the City.

Assets and Opportunities

- The community has a strong "sense of place."
- The Boy Scouts of America High Adventure Camp is close to Oak Hill.
- The New River Gorge region is attractive and growing.
- Oak Hill is located at a strategic point near the New River Gorge National River which is internationally recognized and protected by the National Park System.
- Oak Hill sits within the Coal Heritage Area.
- U.S. Route 19 provides good access to the area.
- Small-town character has remained intact.
- Oak Hill can better control the use and appearance of annexed land along Route 19, Route 16, Route 61, Route 612, Gatewood Road, Summerlee Road, Lochgelly Road, Scarbro Road, and Pea Ridge Road.
- Vacant property could provide opportunities for development.

Recommendations

- Identify growth areas along existing commercial corridors and potential sites and strive to concentrate commercial development in those identified and appropriately zoned areas.
- Undertake a comprehensive effort to ensure that the City can manage and capitalize on opportunities for tourism, economic and commercial development, infrastructure, and civic issues related to the Boy Scouts of America High Adventure Camp wherever possible.
- Protect and encourage residential development in appropriately zoned areas.
- Develop guidelines for hillside development and/or preservation.
- Resist development in floodplains.
- Encourage and protect clean waterways.
- Study and, if necessary, update the City's zoning ordinance in order to manage the growth of tourism and commercial businesses.
- Protect and preserve historic sites and properties.
- The City should work with the County to more closely monitor timber and mineral extraction companies that engage in clear cutting and earth moving.
- Balance corridor development along U.S. Route 19 with infill development and redevelopment in Oak Hill's central business district.
- Enforce the vacant property ordinance.

2.B Housing

Goal

The goals of the Housing Section are: 1) to strengthen and protect the existing housing stock; and 2) efficiently and effectively oversee the development of new housing in order to provide a mix of housing types and densities throughout the City.

Assets and Opportunities

- The community has an opportunity to attract retirees to the area.
- Sprawl has been contained by the terrain.
- Housing is affordable.
- Oak Hill has a low cost of living and a good quality of life.
- Several historic homes and sites have been well-maintained.
- There are a number of interesting and significant residential areas in Oak Hill.
- Stable residential areas contribute to the economic vitality of the central business district.

Recommendations

- Channel new residential development into and around existing population centers to discourage sprawl.
- Identify and support residential development in growth areas.
- Develop design guidelines for residential subdivisions that encourage attractive and sustainable development.
- Retain existing residents and attract new residents of all economic levels by encouraging a variety of housing types throughout the City at a wide range of costs.
- Ensure that new housing construction is compatible with local development patterns.
- Ensure that new subdivisions include walking or bike paths and trails.

2.C Transportation

Goal

The goals of the Transportation Section are: 1) to support, plan, and implement programs that ensure a safe and efficient transportation and circulation system; and 2) to maximize accessibility in and around the community as a means of encouraging housing and economic development.

Assets and Opportunities

- The business districts in Oak Hill are served by three major roads: U.S. Route19, State Route 16, and State Route 61.
- U.S. Route 19 provides good access to Oak Hill.
- Oak Hill's On Trac program identified strategies to help with parking issues in the central business district.
- The White Oak Rail Trail provides opportunities for cyclists and walkers.

Recommendations

- The City should work with the WV Department of Highways to improve secondary roads.
- The City should work with the WV Department of Highways as an advocate for the concept of clustering in order to maximize development along U. S. Route 19 while limiting on-grade entrances to it.
- The City should enforce the two-hour parking limit per the program which is outlined in the On Trac Community Assessment report.
- The City should develop appropriate signage along U.S. Route 19 or take advantage of existing signage to steer tourists and visitors into the business districts.
- Oak Hill should work with Fayette County and other municipalities to develop and plan for, and encourage, cycling as a means of recreation and transportation throughout the County.
- Oak Hill should advocate for, and be a partner in, a countywide traffic study that would provide a strategy to guide and support the development of transportation initiatives; including the identification and mitigation of potential concerns, associated with the Boy Scouts High Adventure Camp.
- Develop better wayfinding and destination signs as recommended in the On Trac Community Assessment Report.

2.D Infrastructure

Goal

The goals of the Infrastructure Section are: 1) to ensure that the infrastructure system is of the highest quality in order to meet the current and future needs of its users; 2) to continue the planning and construction of infrastructure, recognizing that these improvements will be a catalyst for future development in the City; and 3) to encourage and protect clean waterways.

Assets and Opportunities

- Wolf Creek is popular for recreation.
- With water quality improvements, Wolf Creek and Arbuckle Creek will be an even greater asset for local residents.
- In 2001, the Plateau Action Network (PAN) and the West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection (WVDEP) developed a memorandum of understanding and partnered with 16 national, state, and local agencies and organizations, who signed to show their commitment to the long-term restoration of Wolf Creek.
- PAN and WVDEP worked to establish the Wolf Creek Environmental Trust, one of two private/public trusts in West Virginia.
- In 2009 PAN completed a watershed-based plan and hired their first full time staff member to coordinated the monitoring and cleanup of Wolf Creek.
- The Minden Road Wastewater Treatment Plant services half of the City of Oak Hill.
- The water quality of the District is considered clean.
- The Fayette County Commission manages and supervises funds dedicated to the Arbuckle PSD.

Recommendations

- The City should facilitate community education and empower residents to take the lead in maintaining a clean water source in the region.
- Support WV American Water's efforts to repair and replace old leaking water pipes.
- The City should encourage the Natural Resource Conservation Service and other agricultural programs to prioritize grant opportunities and outreach in watersheds with known fecal coliform impairments.
- The City should recommend that the Fayette County Farmland Conservation Board partner with efforts to improve the Wolf Creek watershed.
- The focus of wastewater management in the City should be dedicated to system improvements to decrease the amount of fecal coliform discharging into Arbuckle Creek.
- Systematic detection and repair of major and minor leaks in the sewer collection system is necessary by the Arbuckle PSD.
- The City should identify, manage, and protect environmentally sensitive areas in the U.S. Route 19 Corridor.
- The City should recognize environmental quality as a legacy issue and employ a comprehensive effort, including studies, planning documents, and ordinances, to protect and preserve the highest standard of environmental quality.
- Encourage and protect clean waterways, especially those with have a direct impact on the New River.
- The City should encourage government cooperation across jurisdictional boundaries to maximize resources.
- The City should establish policies and enforcement procedures pertaining to stormwater management, watershed protection, and water quality.
- The City should establish a watershed overlay zone (preferable over the stream buffer or stream overlay zone) for the comprehensive regulation of watersheds. The watershed overlay zone should place use restrictions and stringent design standards on all development within the environmentally sensitive headwater areas within a watershed.
- The City should consider creating a Memorandum of Agreement between the City, County, and State to resolve stormwater issues created along U.S. Route 19 that appear to be related to improper culvert maintenance and sizing. The roadway culverts are the responsibility of the West Virginia Department of Highways, making enforcement of maintenance difficult.
- The City should consider regulating development on hillside slopes exceeding 18 percent.
- The City should consider encouraging the use of outdoor lighting systems that minimize 'light pollution' in the night sky.
- Identify the community's recreational needs and plan future improvements.
- Encourage the construction of new community facilities that meet the needs of residents and visitors.
- Public facilities and utilities should be planned to expand and change as the City evolves.

2.E Public Services & Governance

Goal

The goals of the Public Services Section are: 1) to meet the current and future civic needs of residents and visitors; 2) ensure that the City offers a wide variety of public services; and 3) ensure that public services and facilities meet the needs of all age groups, abilities, and affiliations.

Assets and Opportunities

- The City supports private community-oriented facilities.
- Oak Hill has a number of public schools.
- Oak Hill has a public library.
- Oak Hill is home to the Fayette Institute of Technology.
- There are a number of active churches and community organizations in Oak Hill.
- A water hydrant improvement program is being implemented for the Harlem Heights neighborhood.
- The City has adopted a housing/livability code to ensure quality housing in all neighborhoods and in communities.
- Plateau Medical Center in Oak Hill offers full-service community health services.
- The 7.5 mile White Oak Rail Trail, opened in 2008, serves as a multi-use path for hiking, walking, and biking.
- The City has three public parks: Oak Hill City Park, Russell Matthew Park, and Collins Park.
- Oak Hill has an amphitheatre nearing completion.
- Oak Hill is home to the annual Oak Leaf Festival.

Recommendations

- Ensure that public services are provided without duplication.
- Develop and deliver public services in a cost-effective manner.
- Ensure that there are adequate public services to meet the needs of residents of all age groups.
- Enhance the delivery system of public services through financial and technical resources.
- Consider adopting a capital improvements program and capital budgeting process to help establish community priorities.
- Maintain, through future appointments, the roles and functions of ongoing City boards and commissions including the Planning & Zoning Commission, the Board of Zoning Appeals, and any other ad hoc committees which may be required to assist them in Plan-related actions or activities.
- Discuss with the Fayette County Commissioners and elected officials of other municipalities in the County the establishment of an annual Comprehensive Plan Meeting as a method of coordinating plans and programs to achieve shared goals and to address common challenges.
- Maintain ongoing procedures for incorporating the views of City residents into the planning process to make public plans consistent with public needs.
- The City should continue to recognize the importance of good schools to economic development.
- The City should work with the County to develop a plan to encourage and support cycling as a means of recreation and transportation.
- The City should study and implement a strategy to quantify and provide for an increased demand for gateway signs and public amenities (information, benches, and restrooms) as a result of increased tourism activity.
- The City should encourage road or highway adoption programs to reduce and discourage littering along roadways.
- Oak Hill should continue to encourage the County's efforts to enhance the 911 system.
- The City should investigate opportunities for cooperation between the City and the Fayette County Board of Education to provide facilities and programs to area residents, and to improve the overall educational achievement.
- The City should support partners and programs that provide opportunities for daycare, youth, and seniors, such as after school programs, camps, health care, and other programs.

- The City should improve and enhance local recycling efforts.
- The City should bring vibrancy to the business districts to enhance the quality of life in Oak Hill.

2.F Rural

Goal

The goal of the Rural Section is to coordinate efforts between the City and Fayette County, as well as other governmental agencies, to protect the rural areas which border the City.

Assets and Opportunities

- There is only one farm (Lundale Farms) in the City that requires preservation planning.
- Rural land has given way to development around infrastructure relieving pressure for further development in the rural areas of Fayette County.
- Oak Hill is a development area for Fayette County.

Recommendations

- Lundale Farms should be preserved.
- Oak Hill can reduce the pressure for greenfield development by implementing the Smart Growth Principals of Compact Development, and encouraging urban infill and mixed use development in the zoning and subdivision regulations.

2.G Recreation

Goal

The goals of the Recreation Section are: 1) to promote the importance of open public space for recreational and leisure activities, and 2) to protect and improve the City's existing recreation facilities and support opportunities for improvement.

Assets and Opportunities

- The City supports private community-oriented facilities.
- Oak Hill has a public library that offers leisure activity and programs.
- There are a number of active churches and community organizations in Oak Hill.
- The 7.5 mile White Oak Rail Trail, opened in 2008, serves as a multi-use path for hiking, walking, and biking.
- Oak Hill is home to the annual Oak Leaf Festival.
- Oak Hill has an amphitheatre nearing completion.
- Fayette County and the New River Gorge are known at a national level for quality outdoor recreational opportunities, including white water rafting, canoeing, kayaking, rock climbing, hiking, and bird watching.
- The public access to the ACE Outdoor Adventure Center is located in Oak Hill.
- The City has three public parks: Oak Hill City Park (ball fields, playgrounds, and picnic facilities), Russell Matthew Park (pavilion, playground, and ball courts), and Collins Park (pavilions, playgrounds, and picnic facilities).

Recommendations

- The City should work with the merchants and other organizations to develop more community events.
- The City should work with Fayette County to develop a plan to encourage and support cycling as a means of recreation and transportation.
- The City should contact the Governor's Office of Healthy Lifestyle about implementing a walkable community strategic plan for Oak Hill.
- The City should promote the White Oak Rail Trail to residents and visitors.
- The City should work with other agencies and organizations to expand the White Oak Rail Trail and connect it to other trail systems.

2.H Economic Development

Goal

The goals of the Economic Development Section are: 1) to promote the vitality of the City by creating a strong and diverse local economy; 2) to identify and implement policies that will foster economic development opportunities; and 3) to identify and implement policies and guidelines that will reduce the impact of commercial and industrial uses on the City's stable residential areas.

Assets and Opportunities

- Oak Hill is the largest population center in Fayette County.
- The County's selection as the site of the new Boy Scouts of American High Adventure Camp will bring nearly 100,000 visitors to the area annually, which will help the existing tourism industry and businesses, as well as create opportunities for growth.
- Oak Hill sits within a strategic point of the New River Gorge region.
- U.S. Route 19 provides good access to the area.
- The City's small-town character has remained intact.
- Oak Hill can better control the use and appearance of land along U.S. Route 19, State Route 61, State Route 16, Route 612, Gatewood Road, Summerlee Road, Lochgelly Road, Scarbro Road, and Pea Ridge Road.
- Vacant property could provide opportunities for development.
- The 4-C Economic Development Authority is active in Fayette County.
- The Downtown area has several niche industries including internet-based businesses and medical services.
- The Downtown area has good building stock.

Recommendations

- Identify ways to sustain tourism activity throughout the year.
- Provide opportunities and incentives to grow employment and diversify the tax base.
- Support and encourage businesses that highlight traditional regional cultural activities, such as crafts, arts, and music as a contributing factor for the growth of tourism.
- The City should work with the County to undertake a countywide market study to be conducted to provide a strategy to guide and support the development of new businesses including additional lodging establishments that support the Boy Scouts High Adventure Camp.

- The City should identify growth areas and ensure that those areas are properly zoned and prioritized for development.
- Develop a strategy to encourage the appropriate adaptive use of existing significant buildings and structures.
- Assist with the development of better wayfinding and destination signs as recommended in the On Trac Community Assessment Report.
- Existing welcome signs are well-maintained, but need to be updated to be more noticeable to motorists and visitors.
- Enforce the two-hour parking limit in the Central Business District as recommended in the On Trac Community Assessment Report.
- Identify and promote tax incentives for the rehabilitation of buildings in the business districts.
- Implement unified and improved landscaping and beautification standards for the East End of the City.
- Establish and implement a "shop local" initiative, as recommended in the On Trac Community Assessment Report.
- Promote business opportunities in Oak Hill, with a focus on capturing businesses that cannot find real estate in other areas of Fayette and Raleigh Counties.
- Study and, if necessary, update the City's zoning ordinance in order to manage the growth of tourism and commercial businesses.
- Protect and preserve historic sites and properties.
- The City should balance corridor development along U.S. Route 19 with infill development and redevelopment in Oak Hill's central business district.
- Consider pursuing a niche market in environmental (green) rehabilitation and historic preservation, as suggested in the On Trac Community Assessment Report, in order to qualify for tax credits.
- Adopt and implement creative, flexible, and streamlined development regulations.
- Develop guidelines that protect residential neighborhoods and the quality of life for the community.
- Identify public improvements, appropriately sited, to stimulate economic development and business retention in the areas identified in this Plan.

2.I Community Design

Goal

The goal of the Community Design Section is to identify and implement guidelines for building, infrastructure, and landscape that improve and enhance their surroundings by fostering the small town look and feel, and historical context, of the City's existing development pattern.

Assets and Opportunities

- There have been a number of individual voluntary efforts that have improved the community appearance in the District, including the Spring Forward Litter Sweep.
- The Central Business District is implementing the On Trac program to improve Downtown.
- Oak Hill's small-town character has remained intact, with good building stock in Downtown.
- Oak Hill can better control of the use and appearance of land along U.S. Route, State Route 61, State Route 16, Route 612, Gatewood Road, Summerlee Road, Lochgelly Road, Scarbro Road, and Pea Ridge Road.
- Oak Hill has a number of significant neighborhoods and many historic homes which have been well maintained.

- The Herbert E. Jones Library and Oak Hill Baptist Church create an attractive "entrance" into the Downtown area.
- The Lewis House, the stone walls in front of the hospital, the prism glass transom in the 500 block of Main Street, the Oak Hill Railroad Depot, and the entrance gates to Lundale Farms are all contributing elements to the appearance and character of Oak Hill.

Recommendations

- Develop guidelines for hillside development and/or preservation.
- The City should consider encouraging the use of outdoor lighting systems that minimize light pollution in the night sky.
- The City should work with the Department of Transportation to minimize the number of new on-grade entrances and exits along U.S. Route 19.
- The City should develop ordinances to preserve the natural beauty along U.S. Route 19.
- The City should encourage new development that does not adversely affect existing natural viewscapes and soundscapes, or significantly depart from its small-town character.
- The City should ensure that landscaping and site treatment are used to unify development and preserve character via defining edges, defining entrances, landscaping, and adaptive use.
- Balance corridor development along U.S. Route 19 with infill development and redevelopment in Oak Hill's business districts.
- Develop guidelines for preservation and improvement of the Central Business District.
- The City needs to develop programming or increase enforcement to correct litter issues along roadways and in residential areas.
- The City should seek a National Historic Register designation for the Central Business District, as outlined in the On Trac Community Assessment Report.
- Develop an attractive wayfinding and destination signs as recommended in the On Trac Community Assessment Report.
- Implement unified and improved landscaping and beautification standards for the East End of the City.

2.J Preferred Development Areas

Goal

The goals of the Preferred Development Section are: 1) to provide a rational pattern for future land development that encourages efficient and coordinated growth throughout the City; 2) to provide guidance and direction in indentifying areas most suitable for various types of growth; and 3) to encourage economical infrastructure improvements in coordination with development opportunities.

Assets and Opportunities

- There are several sites with development potential with the City Limits of Oak Hill that would enhance the tax base of the community and allow for expanded City services for the residents.
- U.S. Route 19 has opened up the City for development.
- The business districts in the City have opportunities for infill development.

Recommendations

- Develop appropriate incentives to encourage infill and redevelopment in the City's business corridors.
- Consider the following as preferred development areas and encourage development in these areas:
  - Government ~ Property along Virginia Street between the City Police Department and the WV Department of Health & Human Services.
  - Residential or Recreation ~ Property on the east side of Country Club Road.
  - Business ~ Property adjacent to Route 16 and the former Kentucky Fried Chicken franchise;
  - Business ~ Property at the corner of Main Street and Maple Avenue (former site of the Pure Oil Station).
  - Business ~ Property between BB&T and the Bellann Building.
  - Business ~ Property at the corner of Park Drive and Central Avenue (former site of Lowes and JR's Recycling).
  - Business ~ Property along U.S. Route 19 north of Oyler Avenue.
  - Business ~ Corporate owned property on the east end of Oak Hill at the site of the former Wal-Mart.
  - Business ~ Location of the closed East End Elementary School.
  - Business ~ Property on Packwood Drive.
  - Business ~ Property at the end of Victory Street (former site of Basham's Junkyard).
  - Business ~ Existing un-occupied buildings within the City.
  - Business ~ The property on the north side of Virginia Street from Jones Avenue to Oyler Avenue should be considered for rezoning to B-1 or B-2.
  - Business ~ The property on Jones Avenue from Main Street to Country Club Road (aka Summerlee Road) should be considered for rezoning to B-1 or B-2.

2.K Renewal and Redevelopment

Goal

The goals of the Renewal and Redevelopment Section are: 1) to sustain favorable conditions throughout the City; 2) to support non-profit and public partners performing redevelopment and renewal work throughout the City; and 3) to encourage private investment in the renewal and redevelopment process.

Assets and Opportunities

- An amphitheatre is nearing completion in the Downtown area adjacent to the current City Hall.

Recommendations

- Develop appropriate incentives to encourage growth, infill, and redevelopment.
- Develop public/private partnerships for physical improvements, such as façade and streetscape improvements.
- Develop friendly wayfinding (directional) signs and convenient parking areas.
- Recruit new merchants and industries.
- Provide a quality walking experience in the City.
- Create activities, events, and "things to do" in the central business district.

2.L Finance

Goal

Recognizing that West Virginia municipalities are statutorily limited in their ability to generate revenue to implement capital improvements, the goals of the Finance Section are: 1) to develop sound financial strategies for the implementation of any and all improvements recommended in the plan; 2) to analyze the existing financial strategy for implementing improvements and examine alternative methods of funding; and 3) to develop relationships with public and private sector partners to maximize opportunities for the implementation of improvements.

Assets and Opportunities

- Oak Hill has made a commitment to the strategy of investing in infrastructure and capital improvements in order to create development and growth within the corporate limits.
- The City Council has always pledged its full support for the continued development and construction of water and sewer infrastructure projects.
- The City Council funds and supports its programs geared toward the provision of fire and police services, expansion and attraction of new and existing industrial uses, businesses, and individuals considering the City as a place to live or conduct business.
- The City Council supports its Planning Commission in their efforts to plan for the future of the City and administer its development.
- The City Council supports various community organizations and works with neighborhoods and business districts to build and provide facilities and services to better serve its citizens.

Recommendations

- Maintain an International Organization for Standardization (ISO) Public Protection Classification of 5 or better.
- Identify the current method by which capital improvements are funded.
- Analyze the existing financial strategy for implementing capital improvement projects.
- Examine alternative methods for funding capital improvement projects.
- Determine role of partners in the government and private sectors in capital improvement projects.

2.M Historic Preservation

Goal

The goal of the Historic Preservation Section is to enhance the quality of life for residents and visitors through the preservation of resources that are significant for their architectural, archaeological, economic, educational, social, and cultural value in the community.

Assets and Opportunities

- The Central Business District is implementing the On Trac program to improve the Downtown area.
- Oak Hill's small-town character has remained intact, with good building stock.

- Oak Hill can better control the use and appearance of annexed land along U.S. Route 19, State Route 61, State Route 16, Route 612, Gatewood Road, Summerlee Road, Lochgelly Road, Scarbro Road, and Pea Ridge Road.
- Oak Hill has a number of significant neighborhoods and many historic homes which have been well maintained.
- The Herbert E. Jones Library and Oak Hill Baptist Church create an attractive "entrance" into the Downtown area.
- The Lewis House, the stone walls in front of the hospital, the prism glass transom in the 500 block of Main Street, the Oak Hill Railroad Depot and the entrance gates to Lundale Farms are all contributing elements to the appearance and character of Oak Hill.
- Oak Hill has already demonstrated the ability to develop the first Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design (LEED) certified building in West Virginia.

Recommendations

- The City should seek a National Historic Register designation for the Central Business District, as outlined in the On Trac Community Assessment Report.
- Identify properties and structures that are of historical significance and develop policies for their protection and preservation.
- Develop community design guidelines and incentives that encourage new and infill development to build upon existing architectural features and character.
- Promote the practice of adaptive reuse for historic properties through the use of financial and regulatory incentives.
- Encourage compatible uses and proper buffers around all historically and culturally significant properties.

2.N Tourism

Goal

The goal of the Tourism Section is to promote travel and tourism in the City so that the economic benefit from tourism will enhance the local commercial vitality and quality of life.

Assets and Opportunities

- The community has a strong "sense of place."
- The New River Gorge region is attractive and growing, with an estimated one million visitors annually.
- Oak Hill is located at a strategic point near the New River Gorge National River which is internationally recognized and protected by the National Park System.
- Oak Hill sits within the Coal Heritage Area.
- U.S. Route 19 provides good access to the area.
- Small-town character has remained intact.
- The 7.5 mile White Oak Rail Trail serves as a multi-use path for hiking, walking, and biking.
- Oak Hill is home to the annual Oak Leaf Festival.
- Fayette County and the New River Gorge are known at a national level for quality outdoor recreational opportunities; including white water rafting, canoeing, kayaking, rock climbing, hiking, and bird watching.

- The public access to the ACE Outdoor Adventure Center is located in Oak Hill.
- Wolf Creek offers recreational opportunities.
- The Oak Hill Railroad Depot could have a significant impact on local merchants.

Recommendations

- The City should seek a National Register District designation for the central business district, as outlined in the On Trac community assessment report.
- Develop attractive wayfinding and destination signs as recommended in the On Trac community assessment report.
- Implement unified and improved landscaping and beautification standards for the East End of the City.
- The City needs to develop programming or increase enforcement to correct litter issues along roadways and in residential areas.
- Protect and preserve Wolf Creek, Arbuckle Creek, and Loop Creek.
- Work with the Fayette County Convention & Visitors Bureau, hotels, and B&Bs in the City to develop and promote Oak Hill's attractions and events.
- The City should train "hospitality receptors," including convenience stores and gas stations, as outlined in the On Trac community assessment report.
- Promote and educate residents and businesses about tourism opportunities and impacts.
- The City should work with other jurisdictions in the Southern Coalfields Region to effectively and efficiently promote travel and tourism.
- Balance corridor development along U.S. Route 19 with infill development and redevelopment in Oak Hill's business districts.
- The City should support and encourage emerging bicycling interests in the City and county, including the White Oak Rail Trail.
- The City should involve the youth in planning recreation and tourism activities and events.
- The City should research best practices to promote and attract rural tourism as a means of expanding City's tax base.
- Expand the festivals and events in the business districts to attract more tourists.

CHAPTER THREE – CONCLUSION

This Comprehensive Plan outlines the future direction of Oak Hill. This future direction is premised upon the implementation of the several sets of recommendations outlined within the Plan. In order to operationalize these recommendations, and the locally expressed goals, an implementation agenda must be put into action. This agenda can be achieved through various planning program components.

The impact of this Comprehensive Plan, in the long term, will be measured by the degree to which the Plan's implementation recommendations are translated into reality. These recommendations, no matter how carefully conceived, would have little effect in guiding growth and development in the City if they are not implemented.

The adoption of this Comprehensive Plan serves as only one element of a continuous growth management process for the City of Oak Hill. The responsibilities for implementing the Plan must be shouldered by both the public and private sector alike. The Plan serves as the design framework around which relevant future land use decisions are based. Its implementation must be directed by growth management tools - zoning, subdivision, and site plan ordinances and building codes - which are fully integrated into the Plan's vision for the City. The concept of linkage between the Plan and these tools has been a dominant planning theme in this effort. The recommendation portion of each section of the Plan address the specific unifying linkages which will promote a successful growth management process wherein growth by design is fully achieved.

One of the most valuable lessons learned during the City's plan update process is that quality built environments and design excellence require exhaustive work by both the private sector (in defining specific market opportunities and project designs) and the public sector (ensuring project land use compatibility within the context of a comprehensive plan). This Comprehensive Plan, by itself, is insufficient to implement growth by design. Furthermore, it is important to note that zoning, site plan, and subdivision ordinances alone do not fully ensure that private development will be sensitively created.

This Comprehensive Plan's vision is ultimately defined by the many discrete public and private decisions, which address matters of location, density, scale, infrastructure, visual quality, and phasing of any particular development proposal. Accordingly, the tools and methods to be incorporated into the growth management effort must focus on each individual aspect of the land development process.