

CHAPTER 2.

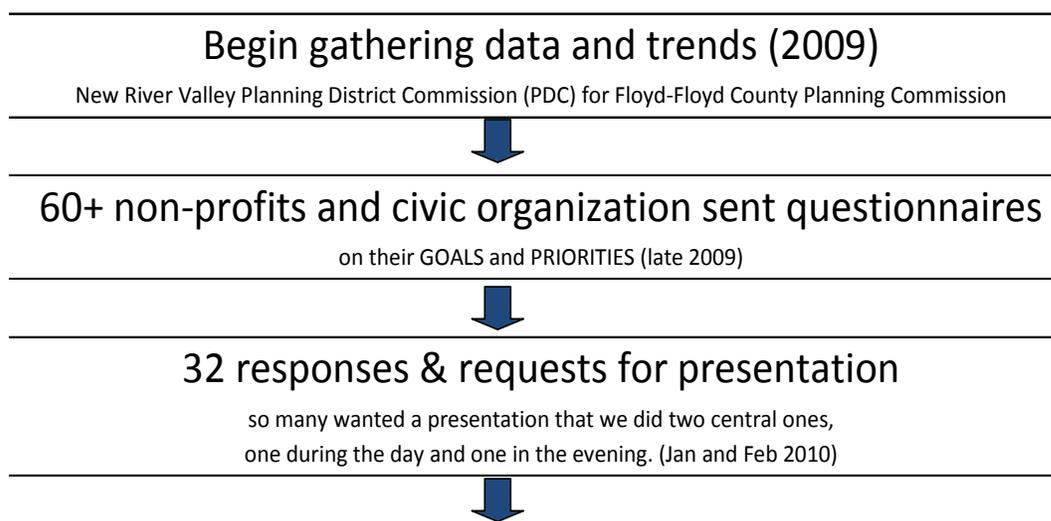
WHAT DOES OUR COMMUNITY WANT TO BE?

This written plan is the culmination of work that began over a year ago to understand and document where the community is and where it wants to go. To assure a broad cross-section of community concerns were gathered for this Comprehensive Plan update, several methods were used to invite citizen participation. Also, an online business survey was conducted and is summarized in Chapter 5.

First, a questionnaire was sent to over 60 civic groups and non-profits, inviting them to share their goals, plans and needs for the next few years. Over 30 shared their ideas and requested more information on the comprehensive planning process. Consequently, two meetings were held in early 2010, a day and evening meeting, to share background data and welcome input for the plan. From those meetings, key themes emerged and focus group meetings were set up.

Figure 1

FLOYD COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING



Focus Groups

Focus group participants were sought by topic area: attendees from the above meetings were invited, as well as the public through newspaper articles, website notices and emails. See topics at right. Input received at these meetings prompted further research and analysis and provided the basis for ideas shared at the community input meetings.

Figure 2



Community Input Sessions

Four community input sessions were held in the summer of 2010: in Indian Valley, Willis, Floyd, and Check. Notice of the meetings was mailed to all property owners as well as published in the local paper and through flyers at stores.



Photo by Kevin Byrd

At these meetings development trends were presented, as were the ideas gathered at focus group meetings. Staff answered questions about the information presented and then attendees were given ranking sheets to help narrow focus and prioritize ideas for the Plan. People who attended multiple meetings were only allowed to submit one ranking sheet. Additional comments were also received at these sessions. Figure 3 lists the Top 10 highest response rankings from these meetings. These priorities were used as the foundation of this plan. Figure 4 shows sample comments. *A complete list of comments is available on request.*

Figure 3: Top 10 Ideas from Community Ranking Sheets

1. Preserve Agriculture and forest areas
2. Protect agricultural land and water resources through zoning
3. Increase light industry, technology, and innovation jobs
4. Increase opportunities to process local foods into more products
5. Explore Alternative Energy Systems
6. Provide more assistance to small business
7. Increase Vegetable and Specialty crop production
8. Develop an Assisted Living Facility in the County
9. Expand recycling and study waste collection options for cost efficiencies
10. Develop pedestrian walkways, trails, and bike lanes



Figure 4
Sampling of Written Comments from Community Input Session that shaped
Floyd County's Goals and Objectives:

~As the historical backbone of Floyd, loss of agricultural lands hurts our potential sustainability in future hard times (or everyone's) and robs us of our cultural roots.

~Absolute need for agricultural zoning to not only allow farming and continue here but also to maintain enough green space that wildlife is not forced into our yards, gardens, barns, and the middle of the road.

~We need industry in our county, we need to put people to work.

~We need zoning in the county to assure our growth respects our resources. We need to study cluster development.

~Encourage more farming and on-farm processing. Facilitate added value opportunities for farmers and home producers.

~No Zoning! Neighbors should be able to do whatever they want on their property and I can do what I wish with mine. This nation has always been like this and we've had no problems. All this property belongs to God, not us. He can take care of it and us. Amen.

~We need to put a priority on preserving agriculture in Floyd. Zoning and tax incentive program will be necessary to accomplish this. The farmer cannot make it here without organized support.

~Our kids need facilities (fields, movies, swimming etc.)

~Preserve marshes. Restore creeks back to marshes that have been destroyed by livestock. Marshes are very important for water replacement in aquifers.

~Must begin working towards a 'one stop shop' for all social services.

~Keep out large box stores.

~Bike lane from town of Floyd to Parkway would be great for tourism.

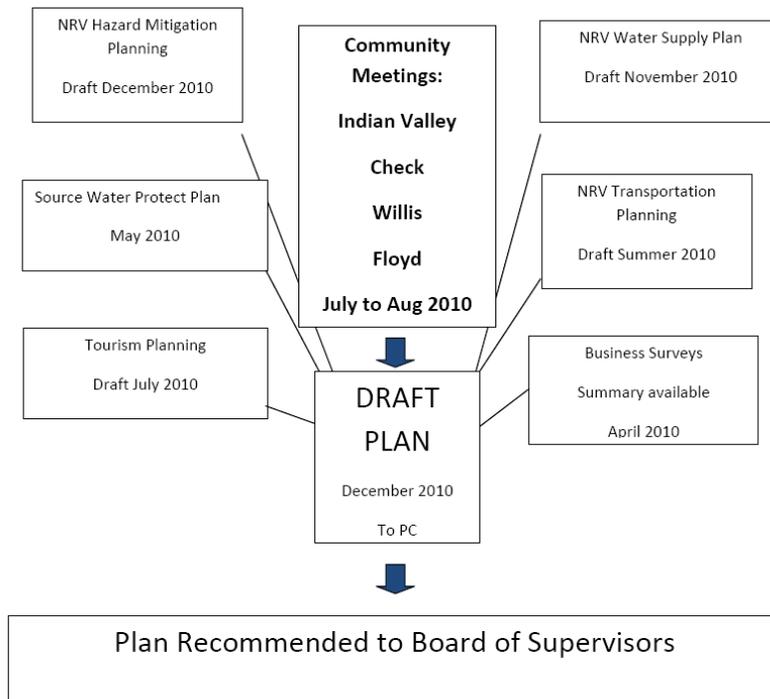
~Cluster low rent housing near services

~Affordable housing, and appropriate housing for elders is important.

In addition to the Focus Group meetings and the Community Input meetings in various parts of the County, a “Common Ground” meeting was held in July 2010 in conjunction with the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation and the New River Land Trust. Invitations were sent to farmers, and they were asked to share their concerns and ideas about the land in Floyd County. Many attended and expressed concern about the economic viability of farming. Specifically, concerns about increasing input costs, decreasing revenue, and access to financing and enough land were shared.

While factual data provides the background of the plan, the direction was set by the community input for this plan and other community-drive plans (see Figure 5.)

Figure 5 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN INPUTS, PART II



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What Does Our Community Want to Be?

Summary and Conclusion

A lot of community input was gathered for this plan. The majority of the community input might be summarized in one simple “vision” statement:

Floyd County is a creative, prosperous, and resilient community that respects its people and protects its farms, forests and water for future generations.

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