

**Inventing Tomorrow Today:
The Role of the Occoquan
Comprehensive Plan**

**Town of Occoquan Comprehensive Plan
Public Input Forums
November, 2015**

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Understanding and Appreciating the Comprehensive Plan

What is a Comprehensive Plan?

The comprehensive plan is a tangible representation of what a community wants to be in the future.

Comp Plan Characteristic

First, it is a *physical plan*. The plan translates community hopes, dreams, aspirations and values into a scheme that describes how, why, when and where to build, rebuild, or preserve the community.

A second characteristic of the comprehensive plan is that it is *long-range*, covering a time period approximating 10- 20 years into the future.

A third characteristic of the plan is that it is *comprehensive*. It covers the entire community. A comprehensive plan encompasses all the functions that make a community work, such as transportation, housing, land use, utility systems, public facilities, business and commercial uses, and open space. Moreover, a good comprehensive plan will consider the interrelationship between and among the functional uses noted above.

A fourth characteristic of the plan is its ability to *guide growth and development within the community*. Indeed, a good comprehensive plan should function as a policy document to be used by local leaders when making decisions and when taking local action. Examples will include:

1. Requests to change zoning of a particular parcel of land.
2. Decisions about expansion of major infrastructure.
3. Decisions about location of new infrastructure.
4. Decisions about major public investments.

Comp Plan Nomenclature

The Community Plan should be:

- a. Long range
- b. Jurisdiction-wide
- c. General in character
- d. Comprehensive per topics/elements

The Community Plan should feature:

- a. District/area plans
- b. Specific in character
- c. Specific in area
- d. Focused on change management

The Community Plan should feature:

- a. Functional plans where appropriate
- b. Focused on a single topic
- c. With tie-ins to related subjects
- d. Focused on short and long-term timeline

Steps in Developing a Community Plan

1. Identify important issues on which the planning process will function.
2. Identify community strengths and weaknesses.
3. Identify community orchids and onions.
4. Analyze community data and inputs.
5. Collect/map information about growth and location patterns.
6. Map current projects/project build-out.
7. Develop a vision/direction for the community.
8. Develop goals/objectives and strategies to achieve the vision.
9. Map the vision

ORGANIZATION OF A GENERAL PLAN

Introduction

- Purpose and nature of the plan
- Role of the planning process in local government
- Relationship of the general plan to other community actions

Background

- Historical background of development in the community
- Current conditions and trends
 - The built environment
 - The natural environment
 - The economic environment
 - The social environment
- Current and emerging issues that have long-term implications

Assumptions

- Assumed effects of external forces on the future of the local community
 - Physical developments
 - Social developments
 - Economic developments
 - Political developments
- Local policies, values, and actions that will affect development
- Regional issues; regional goals
- Forecasts of regional and local growth

Overview of the Plan

- Community vision statement
- Community goals and policies
- Basic community design concepts
- Major design proposals

General Plan Diagram

Elements/Chapters/Themes

- Land Use
 - Residential areas
 - Working areas (commercial, industrial, etc.)
 - Other areas
- Circulation
 - Street network
 - Public transit/Pedestrian
- Community facilities
- Utilities
- Natural resources, natural hazards, and open space
- Design/development policies

Major Implementation Processes

- Zoning
- Subdivision and site planning
- Capital improvements programming
- Implementation schedule