

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Manassas Next – the 2032 Comprehensive Plan

Manassas Next - the 2032 Comprehensive Plan (Plan) has been prepared and adopted by the City of Manassas (City) to articulate a vision for the community's future, and establish a road map for how to achieve that future. Manassas Next is an update of the community's last Comprehensive Plan, adopted by the Manassas City Council on March 10, 2003. It takes its title "Manassas Next" from a holistic approach to making Manassas a better place to live and raise a family. Manassas Next is all about planning for the future of the community, and it is appropriate that the City's Comprehensive Plan adopt this title.

Information and recommendations from the 2003 Plan have been reviewed, refreshed, and carried over into this update. New chapters have been added in response to changing conditions, new ideas, and new Commonwealth requirements for Comprehensive Plans. Accordingly, chapters relating to Housing and Neighborhoods, Environment, and Cultural Resources have been added in this update.

1.2 State Code Compliance

Section 15.2-2223 of the Code of Virginia requires a Comprehensive Plan to be prepared and adopted and sets forth the scope and purpose of the plan. The Code includes a list of items to be included in the plan, such as land uses, public uses, historic preservation, housing policies, and road and other transportation improvements. In addition, this Comprehensive Plan meets the requirements for urban development areas including, but not limited to, the plans and policies set forth in the City's adopted Sector Plans

Section 15.2-2230 requires that a local comprehensive plan be reviewed at least once every five years by the local Planning Commission to determine whether it is advisable to amend the plan. This determination is then forwarded to the local governing body either in the form of a comprehensive plan amendment for any changes needed or a resolution stating that the plan does not require any amendments.

1.3 User's Guide

This User's Guide is offered to provide a description of Manassas Next – the 2032 Comprehensive Plan, what it includes, and how it is relevant to the Manassas community. It addresses the following questions:

- What is Manassas Next – the 2032 Comprehensive Plan?
- What is included in the Plan?
- What are the key elements of the Plan?
- Who uses the Plan?
- How is the Plan coordinated with other community plans?

What is Manassas Next – the 2032 Comprehensive Plan?

Manassas Next is a guide to decision-making regarding the future of Manassas. The Plan will address three main questions: (1) what is the status of the community in 2012; (2) what are the goals for the City in the future; and (3) what needs to happen to achieve those goals? The plan provides guidance that identifies a framework of goals, community policies, and lists specific implementation strategies to guide future decision making in Manassas.

The Plan's Organizing Themes:

- ♦ Land Use
- ♦ Housing and Neighborhoods
- ♦ Economic Development
- ♦ Mobility (Transportation)
- ♦ Community Facilities
- ♦ Environment
- ♦ Cultural Resources

The planning timeline for this plan is through the year 2032. The Plan provides policy guidance on a variety of complementary community issues that may occur over the course of plan implementation such as coordinating growth and infrastructure, highlighting economic development pursuits, and protecting cultural and environmental resources.

The Plan starts with a clear and concise Vision statement, and is followed by the seven key themes around which the Plan is organized. The Plan concludes with a chapter on Administration and Implementation.

What is included in the Plan?

The Plan contains 10 chapters and 4 appendices. The first two chapters provide an overview and background information on the Plan. Chapter 3 includes a key component, the Character Areas Map which identifies the general areas which will be protected, where growth will be directed in the coming years and the expectations for forms of development and redevelopment. Chapters 3-9 organize the key elements of the Plan (goals, objectives, and strategies) into guidance for future decision-making in the community. Chapter 10 provides guidance for implementing the Plan framework and updating the Plan over time. Each chapter is described below.

- **Chapter 1: Introduction** helps users of the Plan answer pertinent questions, such as: What is the Plan? What does it include? Who uses the plan? How does the Plan coordinate with other community policies?
- **Chapter 2: Community Overview, Vision and Plan Framework** offers a Vision Statement for Manassas, summarizes major forces and trends shaping the community, and summarizes the goals and objectives that form the framework for the Plan.

- **Chapter 3: Land Use** outlines how the City will manage future growth and development in Manassas through 2032. This chapter identifies expected and desirable development forms and future land uses within the City, and introduces a new “Character Areas” concept as an approach to land use planning.
- **Chapter 4: Housing and Neighborhoods** describes the importance of neighborhoods as the building blocks for the Manassas community, along with strategies for conserving the character and integrity of existing neighborhoods.
- **Chapter 5: Economic Development** focuses on the need for job creation and business development in the City and identifies goals and strategies for achieving these objectives.
- **Chapter 6: Mobility** describes transportation planning in Manassas and future goals and strategies for coordinating transportation improvements, including non-motorized transportation and transit.
- **Chapter 7: Community Facilities** details the community goals, strategies, and level of service standards for providing public services to the City’s residents into the future.
- **Chapter 8: Environment** addresses the need to protect important natural resources in the community and provides strategies to achieve these goals.
- **Chapter 9: Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Resources** provides strategies and level of service standards to meet the parks, recreation, and cultural needs of Manassas citizens.
- **Chapter 10: Administration and Implementation** provides information on how the Plan is to be implemented, priorities for action, and timetable for monitoring implementation activity.
- **Appendix A: Sector Plans** highlights detailed, specific area plans for Downtown and the Mathis Corridor.
- **Appendix B: Bike and Pedestrian Plan** provides standards and guidelines for promoting increased use and safety of bicycling and walking.
- **Appendix C: Glossary of Terms** defines terminology that is used throughout the Plan.
- **Appendix D: Historical Data, Current Data and Trends** provides information and statistics that are important in drafting goals and objectives, and in the implementation of action strategies included in the Plan.

What are the key elements of the Plan?

The Plan’s Elements:

- + **Goals** are statements about the City’s desired future direction.
- + **Objectives** provide specific guidance for decision-makers.
- + **Strategies** identify actions to achieve the objectives.

The key elements of the Plan are the goals, objectives, and strategies that provide the framework for future decision-making and action in Manassas.

Goals

Goals are statements about what the City aims to achieve over the next 20 years. Goals give decision-makers and citizens a clear idea about the City’s intended direction.

Objectives

Objectives provide more specific guidance for elected and appointed officials, community leaders, staff, and administrators as they make decisions about development, programs, and capital investments in the City.

Strategies

Strategies outline the actions to be taken to achieve the City's goals. These actions are outlined in each of the topical chapters, and then brought together in a prioritized action plan in Chapter 10: Administration and Implementation. Strategies are organized by priorities in Chapter 10. A timeline for action and identification of responsible entities for each action is presented.

Who uses the Plan?

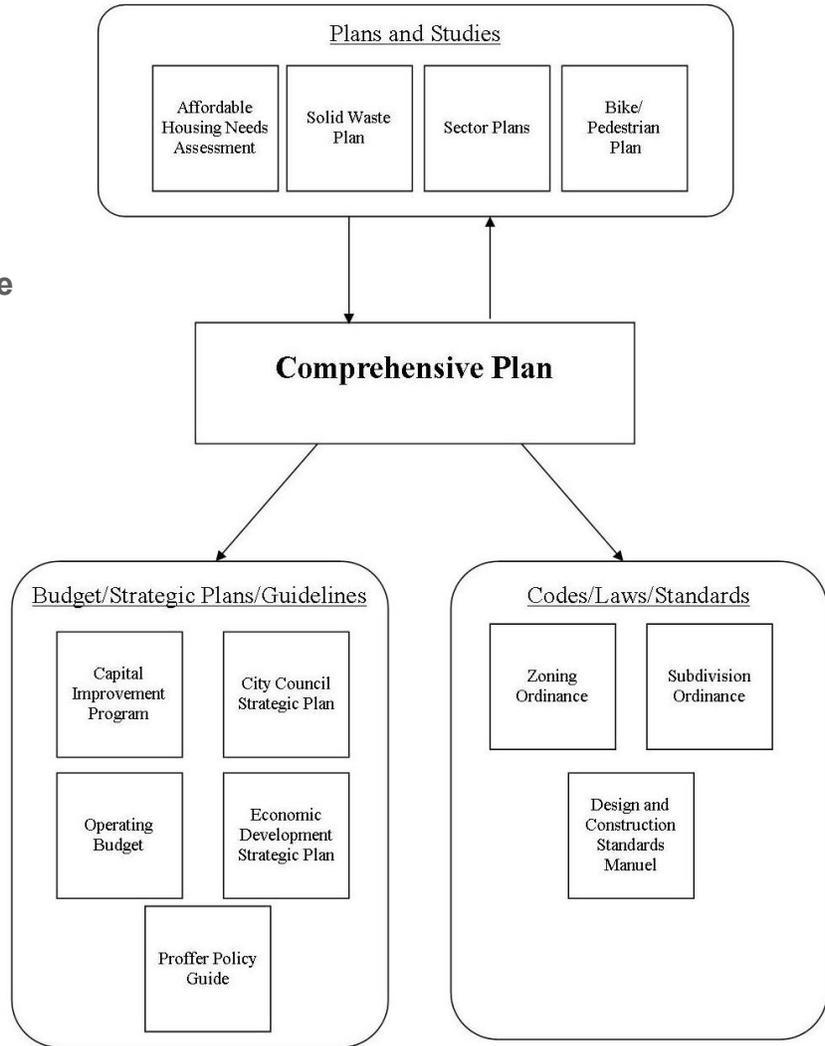
The Plan is intended to be a comprehensive source that stakeholders can use to understand the future goals of the City and the actions it will take to achieve those goals. The Plan will serve different purposes depending upon the interests of the user. Decision-makers, such as elected officials and City advisory boards, will use this document to help make policy decisions and take actions relevant to the goals and objectives outlined in the Plan. Business owners and developers in the community will use the Plan to understand the City's approach to promoting economic development and learn where certain types of development are most appropriately located. Residents of Manassas will use the plan to learn about new community initiatives. City staff will use the plan as a guide for advising decision-makers on City policy questions and to guide development of work plans and new programs.



How is the Plan coordinated with other plans?

Roadways, school facilities, utility plans, environmental conditions, floodplains, and other public facilities and needs for services all need consideration and coordination in preparation of a comprehensive plan. The development of the Plan was undertaken with consideration of existing plans and policies and current conditions in Manassas. In fact, the City's Growth Areas and Future Land Use maps were developed directly from the public utility plans and land use plans of the municipality. This planning effort was coordinated with previously adopted plans to ensure that land use designations are consistent across jurisdictional boundaries and that the plans reinforce each other. Continuing this coordination is a goal of Manassas.

Figure 1: The Comprehensive Plan's Relationship to Other Planning Efforts



What is the Governance Structure for the Plan?

The Manassas City Council is the governing body of the City of Manassas, is responsible for adopting land use policies such as the Comprehensive Plan, Zoning Ordinances and the Capital Improvement Program (CIP). Three members of Council comprise its Land Use Committee which reviews matters related to economic and community development and makes recommendations on these matters to the full City Council.

The Manassas City School Board is charged with the oversight and administration of the City's public schools. The School Board's responsibilities dictated by the statutes of Virginia and the regulations of the Virginia Board of Education are to operate the public schools of the City of Manassas by providing policy for the day-to-day supervision of schools, establishing goals and objectives for each aspect of the school system's operation based upon the identified needs of the community and to provide a framework of general rules and guidelines for school system administration affecting major educational and financial issues of the City's schools.

The City's Planning Commission is a Commonwealth-mandated body created to promote the orderly development of the City. It serves in an advisory role to City Council by reviewing changes to the Zoning Ordinance and CIP. The Commission also makes recommendations for land development cases such as Rezoning, Special Use Permits, and Subdivisions. Most importantly, the Commission is charged with the preparation of the Comprehensive Plan.

Other boards and commissions involved in the development process include the City's Architectural Review Board, Board of Zoning Appeals, and Beautification Committee. The City also works with Prince William County and Manassas Park in an effort to coordinate planning and development between jurisdictions.

The National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB) of the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (MWCOC) is the federally designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Washington metropolitan area. The MPO prepares plans and programs that the federal government must approve in order for the region to receive federal transportation funds for these projects.

The Northern Virginia Regional Commission's (NVRC) roles and functions are providing information, and performing professional and technical services for its members. It serves as a mechanism for regional coordination in Planning District Eight for a variety of policy areas, including Land Use and Transportation. Created in 2002, Northern Virginia Transportation Authority (NVTA) is tasked with preparing and updating the regional transportation plan for Planning District Eight.

How will the Plan be updated?

Section 10.5: Monitoring Implementation, discusses the state laws that govern updates to Comprehensive Plans. It requires that the Planning Commission review the Plan at least once every five years “to determine whether it is advisable to amend the Plan.” Manassas exceeds this requirement by undertaking an annual evaluation of Plan implementation as outlined in Section 10.5 of this Plan.