

THE NEW PLAN

There are two main differences between *this* plan and the Land Use Plan. First, because of the extensive involvement of other departments and agencies, this new effort is going to produce a *Comprehensive* Plan that will be far more than just a land use and zoning tool: it's also going to be useful to the departments and agencies that contribute to its development. For example, it will lend itself very well to the development of a capital improvements program, not only for the County and *its* various departments, but for utility companies, emergency services organizations, and other similar groups as well.

Yet, *like* the Land Use Plan, it is still going to be just as useful to prospective developers and businesses – only it should be even *more* informative than before, because of the inclusion of so much additional information from so many other sources.

The new Plan also has a little different *focus* than before, in that it recognizes certain trends – such as the fact that the large commercial developments are all in the cities. In the unincorporated area of the County, most of the new development taking place is *residential*. And since the different types of residential development are distinguished by density, this Plan seeks to direct new development such that the higher-density growth occurs at locations where the necessary infrastructure will be there to support and maintain it.

Also, a major component of the Plan is going to focus more on how the County can “build” neighborhoods and communities – with an appropriate mix and arrangement of local-oriented commercial and public uses¹ – rather than just trying to anticipate what might happen from one individual parcel to the next.

And that leads into the other main difference in the new Plan: the Watershed Development Plans do not attempt to project the *specific* use of each individual *lot* in an area. Instead, the map simply identifies the land areas where growth *should* or should *not* take place; it indicates the corresponding *intensity* (e.g., density) that new growth should be allowed to reach; and it identifies what the *character* of that development should be (e.g., rural, suburban, urban, etc.). So while the original Land Use Plan attempted to specifically “place” *one* of some *thirty specific “types” of uses* on *each* parcel in the County, the far fewer categories of the new watershed development plan maps will provide much greater flexibility for landowners, developers *and the Commissioners alike* by not attempting to hold specific uses to specific parcels – commercial, residential or otherwise.

As for non-residential uses, the new Plan calls for the evaluation of *commercial* development to be done *within* the context of the neighborhood or community *surrounding* the property in question; and each such *community* identified on the Plan will in turn have its *own* detailed “sub-plan” – seeking, in the end, to create

¹ See Section 3, Element 4 (Community and Neighborhood Planning) for information on what constitutes a “local-oriented commercial use”.

neighborhoods that facilitate pedestrian accessibility to community-oriented businesses and civic uses so that residents do not *have* to leave and go outside their communities as often. Please refer to the more detailed discussions of this aspect of the Comprehensive Plan in Section 1c, and in Section 3, Element 4.

And while that Element 4, the Neighborhood and Community Planning Element, really speaks primarily to residential development, civic/institutional facilities, and office and commercial uses that are primarily going to be oriented toward serving the residential development that is located immediately around them, there are many other land uses in Jefferson County that will still have to be addressed as well. These kinds of developments and uses – which would include all of the uses permitted in all of the County’s industrial zoning districts; any larger-scale, regional commercial center; and certain other unusual or high-impact zones, such as the AIR-1 Airport District and INSTITUTIONAL-3 (where penal facilities are permitted) – will continue to be addressed in accordance with the established policies pertaining respectively thereto, in conjunction with the appropriate plan map (i.e., Proposed Land Use or Watershed Development Plan).

THE CURRENT STATE AND APPLICABILITY OF THE PLANS

While the various policy Elements of the Comprehensive Plan can continue to be expanded over time without reference back to the original Land Use Plan, the 5-year timeframe for preparing the new future development *plans* for all nine of the watersheds in the County will necessitate some overlap. Since each watershed must be done in succession, the adopted Proposed Land Use Maps from the original planning areas will remain in effect for all properties until such time as the respective new watershed plan is completed and adopted – and then the new Watershed Development Plan will supercede the original Land Use Plan for the properties covered in the new watershed plan.

During this interim, the policies of the original Land Use Plan will also continue to be considered applicable; however, in any situation where there is a conflict or other significant difference in the provisions of the original Land Use Plan versus those of this new Comprehensive Plan, the policies and procedures of this Comprehensive Plan shall prevail.

It is also bears restating here that, even when the Comprehensive Plan “overrides” the Land Use Plan, subsequent development – even in *those* areas – will be expected to *continue* to be done under the County’s “conventional” zoning districts and regulations, just as it would under the Land Use Plan. And in fact, until such time an some kind of alternative code or district is prepared and made available *to* prospective developers, *all* subsequent development will *have* to be done in accordance with the zoning, subdivision and construction regulations currently in place.²

² See Section 3, Element 4 (“Community and Neighborhood Planning”) for information regarding a proposed new – but strictly optional – zoning district that would provide an alternative means of designing and developing a village-type site.