WEST VIRGINIA CODE: §8A-3-1

§8A-3-1. Purpose and goals of a comprehensive plan.

(a) The general purpose of a comprehensive plan is to guide a governing body to accomplish a coordinated and compatible development of land and improvements within its territorial jurisdiction, in accordance with present and future needs and resources.

(b) A comprehensive plan is a process through which citizen participation and thorough analysis are used to develop a set of strategies that establish as clearly and practically as possible the best and most appropriate future development of the area under the jurisdiction of the planning commission. A comprehensive plan aids the planning commission in designing and recommending to the governing body ordinances that result in preserving and enhancing the unique quality of life and culture in that community and in adapting to future changes of use of an economic, physical or social nature. A comprehensive plan guides the planning commission in the performance of its duties to help achieve sound planning.

(c) A comprehensive plan must promote the health, safety, morals, order, convenience, prosperity and general welfare of the inhabitants, as well as efficiency and economy in the process of development.

(d) The purpose of a comprehensive plan is to:

(1) Set goals and objectives for land development, uses and suitability for a governing body, so a governing body can make an informed decision;

(2) Ensure that the elements in the comprehensive plan are consistent;

(3) Coordinate all governing bodies, units of government and other planning commissions to ensure that all comprehensive plans and future development are compatible;

(4) Create conditions favorable to health, safety, mobility, transportation, prosperity, civic activities, recreational, educational, cultural opportunities and historic resources;

(5) Reduce the wastes of physical, financial, natural or human resources which result from haphazard development, congestion or scattering of population;

(6) Reduce the destruction or demolition of historic sites and other resources by reusing land and buildings and revitalizing areas;

(7) Promote a sense of community, character and identity;

(8) Promote the efficient utilization of natural resources, rural land, agricultural land and scenic areas;

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(9) Focus development in existing developed areas and fill in vacant or underused land near existing developed areas to create well designed and coordinated communities; and

(10) Promote cost-effective development of community facilities and services.

(e) A comprehensive plan may provide for innovative land use management techniques, including:

(1) Density bonuses and/or density transfer;

(2) Clustering;

(3) Design guidelines, including planned unit developments;

(4) Conservation easements;

(5) Infill development;

(6) Consolidation of services; and

(7) Any other innovative land use technique that will promote the governing body's development plans.

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