



Town of Middletown, Virginia
Gateway to Cedar Creek and Belle Grove National Historical Park

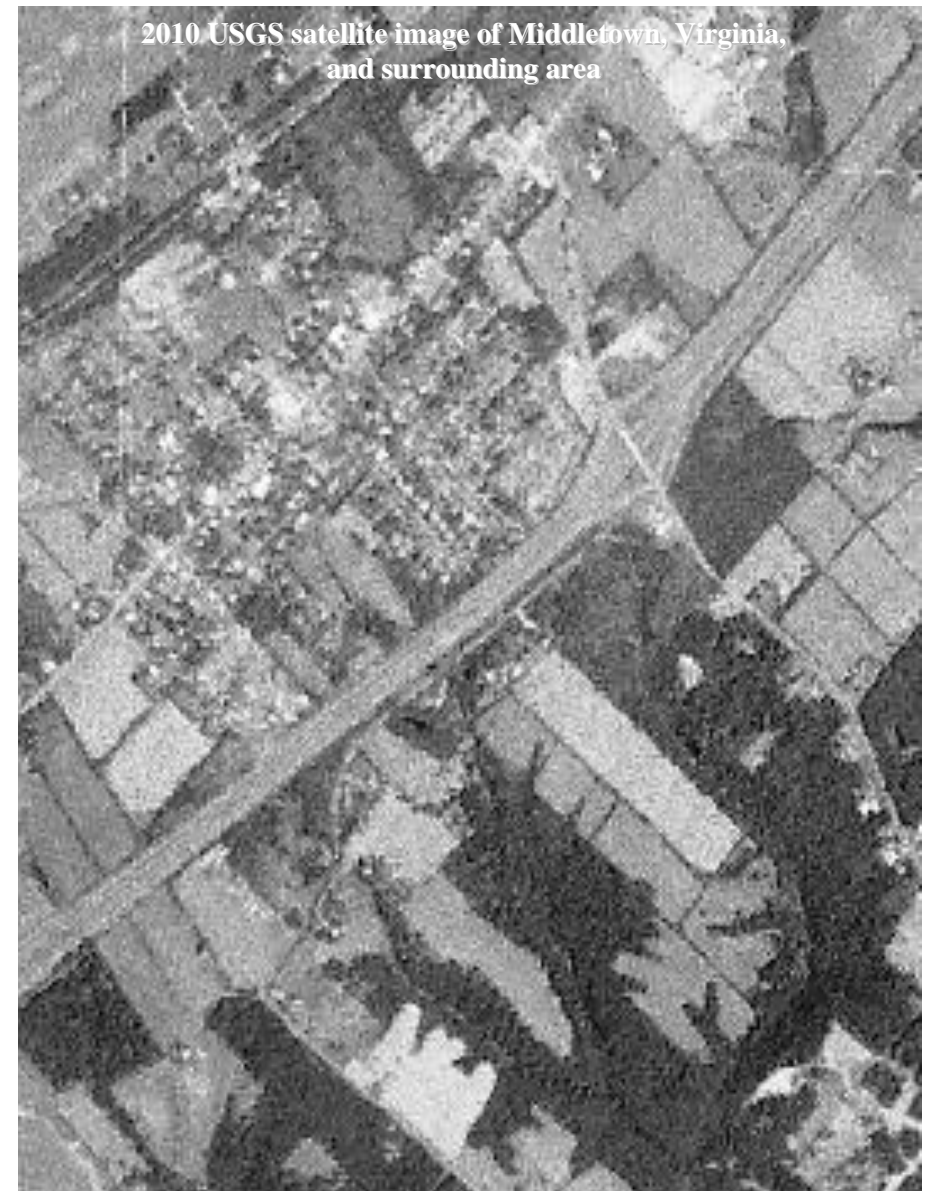
2013 – 2033
Comprehensive Plan

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
INTRODUCTION	3
Legal Authority	3
Basis and Adoption	3
Planning Commission	3
Scope and Purpose	3
Implementation	4
Role of Local Government	4
Respect for the Rights of Individual Property Owners Versus Public Responsibility	4
SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT CHANGES	4
I REGIONAL SETTING AND HISTORY	5
II POPULATION & HOUSING STATISTICS	7
III ECONOMY, BUSINESS AND EMPLOYMENT	8
Current Employment Opportunities	8



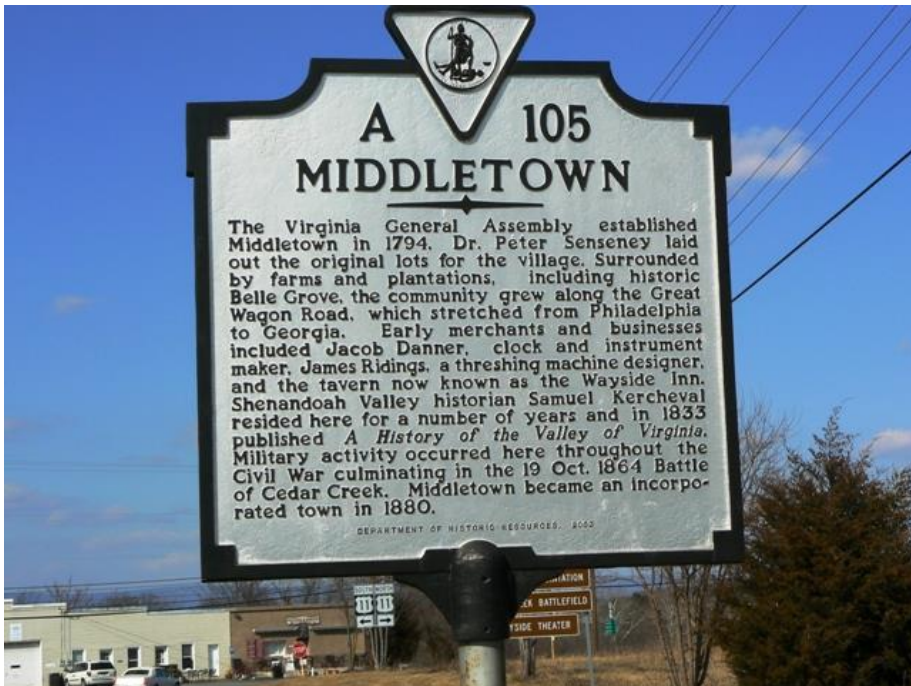
Gateway to the Future	8
Reliance Road Boundary Adjustment	9
IV TRANSPORTATION PLAN	10
Roadways	10
CSX Railroad Crossing	11
Municipal Parking	11
Pedestrian Accommodations	11
Bicycle Accommodations	11
I-81 Exit 302 Bridge	11
VDOT	11

V COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES	12
Parks	12
Municipal Buildings	12
Wastewater Management System	12
Storm Water Management	12
Water Distribution System	13
Water Independence	13
Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act	13

VI GOALS AND STRATEGIES	14
Overview	14
Expand Corporate Limits Across I-81	14
Economic Development	14
Streets, Street Lighting and Sidewalks	14
Parks and Recreational Facilities	15
Storm Water Management	15
Property Management	15
Zoning Administration and Enforcement	15
Historic District	15
Water Independence	15

VII MAPS	16
Current Zoning	16
Transportation Plan	17

APPENDIX A - RELIANCE ROAD AREA LAND USE PLAN	18
APPENDIX B - IMPLEMENTATION TOOLS	20



INTRODUCTION

Legal Authority

All states have enabling legislation addressing comprehensive plans, but in Virginia, state law actually requires comprehensive plans with prescribed content. Section 15.2-2223 of the Code of Virginia requires that every local planning commission shall prepare a comprehensive plan for the physical development of the territory within its jurisdiction and every governing body shall adopt a comprehensive plan for the territory under its jurisdiction. The Planning Commission shall review the plan at least once every five years to determine if amendments are advisable.

Basis and Adoption

In the fall of 2004, community stakeholders and public officials held joint workshops to engage the public, gather information, and draft general planning concepts for the future growth of Middletown. The end results were published in a document entitled "Foresight Middletown," which then went on to be fully incorporated into Middletown's first modern Comprehensive Plan, adopted by Council in 2005. With time, the 160 plus page document proved to be overly cumbersome and in 2009, the Planning Commission was requested to review and revise the plan in preparation for an upcoming boundary adjustment (Appendix A). In February 2012, a special Comprehensive Plan Review Committee was appointed to assume that responsibility and a revision which updated and simplified the plan was completed the same month (see Summary of Changes).

Planning Commission

The Middletown Planning Commission consists of seven (7) members appointed by the Town Council, all of whom shall be residents of the Town

qualified by knowledge and experience to make decisions on community growth and development. One of those members is also a member of the Council and serves as its liaison.

Scope and Purpose of the Plan

In accordance with state code, the comprehensive plan shall be made with the purpose of guiding and accomplishing a coordinated, adjusted and harmonious development of the territory which will, in accordance with present and probable future needs and resources, best promote the health, safety, morals, order, convenience, prosperity and general welfare of the inhabitants, including the elderly and persons with disabilities. ***The plan shall be general in nature*** and shall designate the general or approximate location, character, and extent of each feature, including any road improvement and any transportation improvement, shown on the plan and shall indicate where existing lands or facilities are proposed to be extended, widened, removed, relocated, vacated, narrowed, abandoned, or changed in use as the case may be.

As part of the comprehensive plan, each locality shall develop a transportation plan that designates a system of transportation infrastructure needs and recommendations that may include the designation of new and expanded transportation facilities and that support the planned development of the territory covered by the plan and shall include, as appropriate, but not be limited to, roadways, bicycle accommodations, pedestrian accommodations, railways, bridges, waterways, airports, ports, and public transportation facilities. The plan should recognize and differentiate among a hierarchy of roads such as expressways, arterials, and collectors. The Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) shall, upon request, provide localities with technical assistance in preparing such transportation plan.

The plan, with the accompanying maps, plats, charts, and descriptive matter, shall show the locality's long-range recommendations for the general development of the territory covered by the plan. It may include, but need not be limited to:

1. The designation of areas for various types of public and private development and use, such as different kinds of residential, including age-restricted, housing; business; industrial; agricultural; mineral resources; conservation; active and passive recreation; public service; flood plain and drainage; and other areas;
2. The designation of a system of community service facilities such as parks, sports playing fields, forests, schools, playgrounds, public buildings and institutions, hospitals, nursing homes, assisted living facilities, community centers, waterworks, sewage disposal or waste disposal areas, and the like;
3. The designation of historical areas and areas for urban renewal or other treatment;
4. The designation of areas for the implementation of reasonable ground water protection measures;
5. A capital improvements program, a subdivision ordinance, a zoning ordinance and zoning district maps;
6. The location of existing or proposed recycling centers;

The plan shall include: the designation of areas and implementation of measures for the construction, rehabilitation and maintenance of affordable housing, which is sufficient to meet the current and future needs of residents of all levels of income in the locality while considering the current and future needs of the planning district within which the locality is situated.

The plan shall include: a map that shall show road improvements and transportation improvements, including the cost estimates of such road and transportation improvements as available from the

Virginia Department of Transportation, taking into account the current and future needs of residents in the locality while considering the current and future needs of the planning district within which the locality is situated

Implementation

The Comprehensive Plan provides a long-term perspective of community change, typically spanning a 20 year period. It is one of the most essential documents produced by the Planning Commission. Implementation of the plan occurs through town ordinances, including zoning ordinances, which contain regulations for the use and development of both public and private property within the town.

Role of Local Government

Comprehensive planning should be a continuous cycle of activity. It begins with preparations and adoption of the plan, followed by implementation, and finally periodic review of and updates to the plan to ensure it remains a current document. Preparation of the plan usually starts with collecting and analyzing data about the town, which is then used to identify a preferred vision for the town at some point in the future. Projections are also made regarding the future of the town, such as the size of the population and the levels of certain public services that will be required to accommodate this population. The plan then includes goals and specific means for implementation that are designed to help the town achieve its vision for its future.

Once the comprehensive plan is adopted, the next phase of the planning process is implementation. The plan shall serve as the framework for town

decision-making to ensure that the town is successfully moving toward its desired future. The comprehensive plan is implemented through the daily decisions of town officials, including the adoption and enforcement of regulations, establishment of new or expanded public services and programs, annual budgeting, and capital improvement programming. The effort and foresight that are put into the comprehensive plan during establishment or review are effective only to the level that the plan is implemented by town officials.

The final part of the comprehensive planning process is the periodic review and updating of the plan. This should be an on-going activity that periodically evaluates the data in the plan, identifies current items that need to be addressed, and examines the plan's objectives and implementation strategies to determine if they are adequately addressing town issues. During a review period, the town should gauge whether or not it indeed is making progress towards its desired future. Thorough and accurate plan review and updating is critical to ensure that the plan continues to provide accurate guidance to town officials.

Respect for the Rights of Individual Property Owners Versus Public Responsibility

The government of Middletown has to balance its responsibilities to the community as a whole with that of individual property owners by encouraging direct community involvement in planning, in an open two-way communication process. Respect for the individual rights of Middletown residents to use their properties without excessive governmental mandates makes Middletown a special place.

Every effort must be made to provide a balanced perspective on planning goals versus real-world effects. The government of Middletown is committed to defending property rights and does not encourage using regulatory means to change or deprive its citizens of legal uses they acquired at the time they purchased their homes, lands and businesses, while at the same time ensuring private uses do not impinge on the property rights of others.



SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT CHANGES

The 2013 revision removes dated materials already existing in other stand alone documents (2004 Foresight Middletown Plan, 2002 Historic District Application), makes adjustments reflective of the 2010 U.S. Census, adds goal for expansion across I-81 and water independence, adds the 2011 Reliance Road Area Land Use Plan and generally reformat the document.

REGIONAL SETTING AND HISTORY

Regional Setting

Middletown is located in Southern Frederick County within the Shenandoah Valley of Northwestern Virginia.

Three factors in the Town’s regional setting have greatly influenced its existence and growth. The first factor was the Town’s location along the Great Wagon Road. This early route, with a major branch known as the Wilderness Road, was the most important frontier highway in Colonial America. The road opened Western Virginia to settlement and also provided a market as well as a means to market for area produce and products. The road known as Valley Pike is today identified as U.S. Highway 11.

The second regional setting factor affecting Middletown has been its location near large urban areas and regional employment centers. The nearness of the Town to the Virginia Inland Port and to such cities as Washington D.C., Baltimore, and Richmond make it possible for local industry to easily transport products to major markets and to develop regional employment. Local workers need not commute great distances for jobs.

Of particular current and future importance to Middletown is the presence of the Interstate 81 corridor and the junction of 1-66. This junction, located one mile south of Town, makes Middletown and its surrounding area a central transportation point for the entire Central Shenandoah Valley.

History

Middletown started as one of a series of settlements which sprang up along the Valley Pike within the boundaries of the 17th Century Fairfax Grant, a political payoff to allies of the King during

the civil war in England in the mid-1600’s. The Valley Pike evolved from an early Indian trail that divided the grant as it ran through the Shenandoah Valley and allowed early settlers to move southward through the territory. Some of the first documentation of early Middletown dates back to the late 18th century when “Senseney Town” was laid out by Dr. Peter Senseney and his wife Magdalen, German settlers who had migrated from Pennsylvania. By the time Middletown was established as a town by an act of the General Assembly in 1796, the 50-acre community was already laid out in a grid street pattern with 126 lots. Although Middletown did gain some prominence in the manufacture of quality precision instruments (clocks, watches and surveying equipment) as early as 1786 by Jacob Danner and Anthony Kline, the town has remained a rural community throughout its long history. It is thought that the distance of Middletown from any stream capable of generating water-power discouraged early industrialization and was a major reason the community never developed as an industrial center. By 1800, the census listed its population as 144 free citizens and 12 slaves, and by 1878 it was

incorporated as “Middletown” by an act of the General Assembly.

The history of the Town has been one generally of providing business, educational, religious, and social opportunities to the surrounding countryside as well as serving the needs of travelers in the valley. Around 1889, Middletown was tarnished by one of the many land promotion schemes then



Ca 1905 Postcard “Main Street Looking South”

common. “New Middletown” was to be developed just west of the town boundaries to include the Hotel Belleview (cost \$25,000.00) and “portable houses.” Embracing nearly 1,000 acres of land, it even offered free sites for manufacturing purposes to attract mills, a tin can factory, and others. Sadly,

the boom failed with many people losing money and land.

On a more lasting note is the small tavern built in 1797 by Mr. Israel Wilkinson. Over the decades, and then centuries, it expanded to become a stagecoach relay station and a successful Inn. It is still in operation today as The Wayside Inn and Restaurant, and is one of the oldest continuously operating Inns in the country. Middletown earned a place in our national history through its association with major historical figures in both the colonial and Civil War eras. Between 1794 and 1797, Major Isaac Hite, Jr. and his wife, Nelly Conway Madison (sister of President James Madison), built a large limestone mansion one mile southwest of Middletown. Belle Grove, as the house and 7500-acre plantation became known, had the assistance of Thomas Jefferson in its design. The mansion was restored in the late 1960's and is under the care of the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

The American Civil War brought the armies of both

sides into direct conflict in the singularly most destructive event in the history of Middletown. On October 19, 1864, the Confederate Army of Northern Virginia under the command of Lt. Gen. Jubal Early, nearly overwhelmed the Army of the Shenandoah under Maj. Gen. Philip Sheridan, encamped around Belle Grove, in a surprise dawn attack. The Battle of Middletown, now known as the Battle of Cedar Creek, flowed north for over five hours through the heart of the small community, only coming to a pause on its northern boundary near today's Lord Fairfax Community College because of the exhaustion of the combatants. The famous, if inaccurate, poem of Sheridan's ride is an account of the General's race from Winchester toward Middletown.

Dramatically rallying his troops, General Sheridan reversed the fortunes of the victorious Confederates, causing another ferocious four-hour battle to again push through the heart of Middletown, finally destroying the Army of Northern Virginia as an effective fighting force. Twelve

Union Army enlisted men and nine officers were awarded the Medal of Honor for gallantry during the battle. Casualties for the Union totaled 5,665 (644 killed, 3,430 wounded, 1,591 missing). Confederate casualties are only estimates, about 2,910 (320 killed, 1,540 wounded, 1,050 missing). According to James Taylor, a reporter and artist with Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper, "on my route out Church Street, I am greeted on each hand with the evidence of the fierce fighting in the struggle back and forth during the morning and evening of the 19th, in the buildings and fences, which were peppered like sieves." Today, many old homes in town lay claim to stories of bullets and cannonballs passing through their walls that day.

In an ongoing effort to protect both Belle Grove and the battleground, Cedar Creek and Belle Grove National Historical Park became the 388th unit of the National Park Service on December 19, 2002.



2 PM, October 19, 1864 - The Army of the Shenandoah counterattacks Early's forces north of Middletown



POPULATION AND HOUSING STATISTICS

Historic Rates of Growth

Over the past century, Middletown has seen a significant decline in its overall growth rate as compared to that of Frederick County. While the town grew by an average of 13% each decade, Frederick County increased its population by 21%.

Year	Middletown Population*	Frederick County Population*	Middletown's % of Frederick County's Population
1920	454	12,461	3.6%
1930	416	13,167	3.2%
1940	361	14,008	2.6%
1950	386	17,537	2.2%
1960	378	21,941	1.7%
1970	507	24,107	2.1%
1980	841	34,150	2.5%
1990	1,061	45,723	2.3%
2000	1,015	59,209	1.7%
2010	1,265	78,305	1.6%

* Source: U.S. Census Bureau Population counts.

Population Projections

	Historical		Projected Population	
	2000	2010	2020	2030
Virginia	7,079,030*	8,001,024*	8,917,396**	9,825,019**
Frederick County	59,209*	78,305*	95,648**	114,539**
Middletown	1015	1265	2555	3066
% of County	1.71%	1.62%	2.67%	2.68%

*Census figures from US Bureau of Census, 1990, 2000 & 2010 respectively.

**Virginia Employment Commission

Age and Distribution 2010

Statistically, Middletown shows little or no difference when compared with Frederick County and the Commonwealth of Virginia. Roughly one quarter of the population is under the age of 18, 62% are of working age, and 10% of retirement age. The aging of the Baby Boom population after 2010 will have a dramatic impact on the growth of the elderly population. By the year 2025, the survivors of the Baby Boom will be between the ages of 61 and 79. During the period 2010 to 2025 all States shows a rapid acceleration in the growth of the elderly population.

Age Group	Middletown	Frederick	Virginia
Under 18	345 (27.2%)	25.2%	23.2%
18 - 24	130 (10.3%)	7.9%	10%
25 - 34	157 (12.4%)	11.7%	13.6%
35 - 49	278 (22%)	22.9%	21.6%
50 - 64	230 (18.1%)	19.6%	19.3%
65 & Over	125 (10%)	12.7%	12.2%
Total Population	1,265	78,305	8,001,024

Source: U.S. Census Bureau Population counts.

Household Projections

	Actual	2010	2020	2030
Population	1,015	1,265	2,555	3066
Persons Per Household	2.48	2.48	2.48	2.48
Number of Households	409	508	1030	1236



ECONOMY, BUSINESS AND EMPLOYMENT

The economic future of Middletown can be defined in terms of both employment opportunities for residents and in terms of the financial health of the Town. While common economic development practices such as building industrial parks, constructing speculative buildings or recruiting businesses with incentive packages work well in larger municipalities, they do not necessarily apply during this period of our growth or financial capabilities. The Town must think and act differently.



Employment Opportunities

Local employment is limited to those factories, offices, stores and other businesses that provide jobs, goods and service to Middletown area residents and visitors. There are about 21 different businesses immediately in and adjacent to the corporate boundaries, while numerous other opportunities also lie within a 15 mile radius in communities such as Winchester, Strasburg, Stephens City, and Front Royal. A recent survey found very few Middletown residents employed by Middletown businesses.

Business Categories In and Adjacent to Middletown

Category	Businesses	Employees
Manufacturing	2	400
Education	2	150
Restaurant	4	125
Services	29	120
Construction	10	75
Service Station	2	18
State & Local Government	2	16
Fuel/Convenience Store	2	15
Hotel/Motel	2	15
Church	6	8
Public Administration	1	8
Theatre/Historic Attractions	3	8
Banks/Financial Institution	1	5
Communications	1	5
Retail	2	4
Vehicle Repair	2	4
Apartment/Townhouse Complex	5	2
Car Wash	1	1
Total	77	979

Source: Middletown Business and Professional License Tax Records.

Major Employers In and Adjacent to Middletown

Employer	Product or Service	Employees
Fisher Diagnostics	Biological Products	250
Lord Fairfax	Undergraduate	150
Stowe-Woodward	Printer Roll	50
Carmeuse Stone	Limestone Quarry	30
Total		480

Source: Calls by Middletown staff to local businesses, July 2005.

Manufacturing plays a major role in the area's employment opportunities with a total of 400 jobs, representing 35% of the total employment. The

educational sector is next with 150 jobs (13%). The remaining 580 jobs (52%) are mostly service jobs.



Travel to Work

While some employment is available within the immediate area, over a third of Middletown residents travel more than 30 minutes to work.

Commute Time	Individuals	Percent
Less than 30 minutes	332	67.9%
30-44 minutes	69	14.1%
45-59 minutes	28	5.7%
60 or more minutes	60	12.3%
Total	489	

Travel time to work by means of transportation to work Universe: Workers 16 years old and over who did not work at home.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000, Summary File 3, Transportation Profile 1, Page 59 of 60.

Note: There is no public transportation in Middletown.

Gateway to the Future

Middletown has historically never been and will never be what could be termed "an economic powerhouse" – no manufacturing, no sources of energy nor natural resources. Housing, retailers and industry bypassed the Town over the decades,

leaving in its wake a bedroom community trapped in the mid-20th century. The benefits, a “small town America” way of life that is the envy of most large city dwellers, were soon outweighed by the growing negative economic impact technology forced upon the limited number of residents.

With no future revenue sources readily identifiable, the outlook was bleak indeed until the establishment in 2001 of the Cedar Creek and Belle Grove National Historical Park and Middletown’s designation by Virginia’s House of Delegates as its official Gateway in 2007.

This 3,713 acre park is a joint partnership between the National Park Service, the National Trust for Historic Preservation, Belle Grove Inc, Cedar Creek Battlefield Foundation, Shenandoah County, The Shenandoah Valley Battlefield Association and private land owners. It has placed the Town in a unique position to capitalize on thousands of expected visitors and the associated tourism revenue.



The funding and establishment of a Planning/Economic Development position within the Town government would be especially desirable at this

time to design and implement a program to take advantage of this revenue opportunity. The position and program’s goals would be based on:

- Celebrating our history and heritage
- Creating a compelling marketing umbrella that will draw businesses and visitors into Middletown and enhance our economy.
- Focusing on those qualities of being atypical “Small Town America”



RELIANCE ROAD AREA BOUNDARY ADJUSTMENT

In 2009, a totally separate but interdependent action took place. Land owners adjacent to and east of I-81, approached Middletown officials with a request to place 275 acres of their property within the Town’s corporate boundaries.

I-81 Exit 302 is the last undeveloped exit within Frederick County. Its close proximity to the national park makes it an ideal transit point for park visitors, but its lack of facilities discourages traffic, allowing communities further south to take advantage of the economic benefits.

Efforts in the past to develop land east of the intersection have failed, mainly because the

geology of the land will not support waste water drainage fields nor is there a secure supply of drinking water. With the exception of Middletown supplied water to the Exxon service station, most of the residents depend on shallow depth wells and bottled water. During 2011, a joint Town/county working group developed a land use plan (see Appendix A) that identified water and sewage infrastructure requirements needed to successfully support the boundary adjustments. Middletown already has the excess capacity to support the increased demand for waste water processing and is currently negotiating with the City of Winchester for a larger allotment of drinking water to provide the necessary drinking water capacity.

An expanded Exxon service center, several hotels, restaurants and retail shops are already envisioned for the southwest quadrant. Respect for current B2 zoning in this quadrant needs to be assured to those property owners affected prior to entering into any formal negotiations. The northeast, northwest and southeast quadrants are to be utilized for light industrial applications.

Because of the lack of qualified urban planners, it is imperative that this community work closely in cooperation with county planning officials over the long term to insure a successful outcome.

TRANSPORTATION

ROADWAYS

There are currently 6.5 miles of roads in Middletown. Of these, 6.4 miles are state maintained while the Town maintains approximately 0.1 mile (one block of Sixth Street, between Main and Church Streets; and Fourth Street east from Church Street). VDOT defines Primary Roads as being two to six lanes and connect cities and towns with interstates, while Secondary Roads are state maintained and generally numbered 600 and above. About one (0.89) mile of the streets in Middletown are considered primary (U.S. 11) and the remaining 5.6 miles as secondary roads.

Roadways are also classified by their function:

- Arterial roads are those which carry larger volumes of traffic over long distances at relatively high speeds. I-81 is the only arterial road impacting Middletown.
- Collector roads are those that “collect” traffic from smaller roads and feed it into the arterial system. U.S. 11 and Virginia Secondary Route 627 are classified as major collectors.
- The remainder of the streets in Town are considered local roads which serve to provide access to landowners and carry traffic to collector roads.

Significant investments are needed:

- Some of the primary and most of the secondary roadways within the corporate boundaries have limited or no curb and guttering which are critical to long-term maintenance and storm water control. Isolated areas that are more rural in nature, may be evaluated for construction

of a grass lined “ditch section”, rather than traditional concrete curbing.

- Transitional gateways at the north and south extremities of Main Street and the eastern end of Reliance Road should be designed to clearly delineate the departure from county rural areas into the community. Traffic calming devices such as roundabouts can be effectively incorporated at these points as well as the use of divided roadways with tree-lined grass medians along the two major thoroughfares.
- Heavy industrial traffic generated by the Carmeuse owned quarry empties out at the intersection of Fifth and Main Streets, sending multi-axle vehicles south through the national park or north through downtown Middletown. Actions should be undertaken by the facility to redirect this traffic through a system of internal quarry



roadways to their Strasburg entrance, next to I-81 exit 298.

- VDOT and Lord Fairfax Community College (LFCC) need to identify joint solutions to ease growing traffic congestion on Main Street and Reliance

Road as a direct result of the college growth and expansion. Construction of a roundabout and extension of Carolyn Avenue north to the college would be in the best interest of all parties.

The following roads have the highest volume of traffic within the corporate limits based on AADT (Annual Average Daily Traffic – The estimate of typical daily traffic on a road segment for all days of the week, Sunday through Saturday, over the period of a year).

- Main St. (Route 11), from South Corporate Limit to North Corporate Limit: **4,000 vehicles***, of which 94 % are autos, vans, pickup trucks and motorcycles, and 6% are buses and 2-axle/3-axle/semi-trailer trucks.
- Reliance Rd. (Route 627), from East Corporate Limit to Main St. (Route 11): **2,000 vehicles***.
- Carolyn Avenue, from Massanutten Dr. to Reliance Rd. (Route 627): **1400 vehicles***.
- First St. (Route 627), from Main St. (Route 11) to West Corporate Limit: **1,100 vehicles***.
- Carolyn Ave., from Pleasant View Dr. to Massanutten Dr.: **820 vehicles***.
- Carolyn Ave., from First Street to Pleasant View Dr.: **750 vehicles***.
- First St., from Carolyn Ave. to Church St.: **710 vehicles***.
- Church St., from Fifth St. to First St.: **610 vehicles***.
- Fifth St. (Route 625), from Church St. to Main St. (Route 11): **520 vehicles***.
- Fifth St. (Route 625), from Main St. (Route 11) to West Corporate Limit: **520 vehicles***.

*Source: Daily Traffic Volume Estimates, Special Locality Report 260, Town of Middletown, 2008, 2010

CSX RAILROAD CROSSING

It is recommended that coordination be undertaken with CSX Railroad to upgrade their existing level crossing on the western end of First Street to include crossing gates and pedestrian/bicycle transit paths.



MUNICIPAL PARKING

A significant lack of adequate public parking hampers the growth and infill of businesses along Main Street between First and Fourth Streets. Wayside Theatre patrons are often unable to access sufficient handicap parking in close proximity. Aggressive efforts should be made to identify and purchase land to support a municipal

parking lot that can ensure a healthy and diverse business district.

PEDESTRIAN ACCOMODATIONS

A long-term and extensive sidewalk construction plan needs to be implemented throughout the Town to safely isolate pedestrian traffic from vehicular traffic. Strategically sited park benches and litter containers would allow for citizens rest areas as well as delineate stops for future public transportation implementation. Every effort should be made to ensure handicap accessibility to all areas is incorporated into the design of the sidewalk network.

BICYCLE ACCOMODATIONS

Clearly delineated bicycle paths along Main Street and Reliance Road can safely and efficiently control two-wheeled traffic. Elsewhere, a lighted and landscaped Limestone Alley (running parallel to Main Street and extending from First Street to just past Fifth Street) could also be utilized for additional trailways, such as the proposed Middletown Greenway (a walking/bicycle/carriage trail connecting Cedar Creek and Belle Grove National Historical Park and LFCC, and eventually connecting valley Civil War Battlefield sites to the



north and south). Adding public bicycle racks and outdoor water fountains would further enhance these trails to encourage usage by both the community and visitors.

I-81 EXIT 302 BRIDGE

Preliminary design recommendations should be provided to VDOT for an I-81 replacement bridge (if the proposed boundary adjustment is successful) to fully integrate the newer areas into the community. The design elements should include accommodations for both bicycle and pedestrian traffic.



VDOT

While Middletown can recommend changes, VDOT has the final word on any improvements as well as the responsibility for maintenance. But, exploratory talks are underway to shift the burden of secondary road maintenance responsibilities from the state level to the county level, and ultimately to the municipality level. The establishment, in the very near future, of a transportation improvement fund would not be considered unreasonable.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES

The term “community facilities” describes those buildings or services publicly owned or operated which are necessary for the health, safety and welfare of the people. The only community facilities within the corporate limits of Middletown are municipal buildings, two public parks, a water distribution system and a waste water treatment plant.

PARKS

Middletown currently has a 7.5 acre town recreational park with an entrance at the west end on 2nd Street. The park has restrooms, a softball field, basketball court, gazebo, children’s playground and a picnic shelter. There is also a 1.8 acre non-recreational park located south and adjacent to Sixth Street that has yet to be developed. Consideration should be given to those design elements that would attract both residents and visitors to ensure optimum utilization while keeping maintenance requirements at a minimum.

MUNICIPAL BUILDINGS

The Town has limited assets that are adequate at this time to meet its mission requirements. The small staff of the Town Office (Town Manager, Municipal Clerk, Treasurer, and Zoning Administrator) work in a renovated 1880 school building at 7875 Church Street, along with the Police Department. Considering their value, consideration should be given to the construction of shelters for the Police vehicle fleet. Council chambers, located in a modern addition to the same building, are also suitable as a community meeting room. A large, second floor storage area, accessible only by an exterior fire escape, could be converted into additional office space. As the

community expands and personnel requirements increase, funds should be allocated for construction of an internal staircase and renovation of the upper floor. More immediate needs include a replacement heating and AC system with associated ductwork to heat/cool both existing offices and storage room.

A combined Maintenance Shop/Water Laboratory building is located at the western end of Third Street. Expansion of the facility is needed to include OSHA recommended break areas, training classroom, storage and an additional maintenance bay. Again, consideration should be given to the construction of shelters for the Public Works vehicle fleet, as well as security fencing to encircle the building and parking/outdoor equipment storage areas. Other building assets include a wooden picnic shelter, a wooden gazebo and a concrete block bathroom in the Town park. Three pump stations, one with associated underground stairways and equipment elevators, are also maintained by the Town and in need of upgrade.

WASTEWATER MANAGEMENT

Middletown upgraded its wastewater treatment



system in 2007 to incorporate an enclosed treatment and disinfection process. The upgraded facility allowed the former lagoons to be filled and reclaimed for future parkland or recreational uses. The design capacity of the upgraded treatment facility is 400,000 gallons per day. A modern laboratory performs monitoring tests to ensure the output meets State Standards. The facility currently operates at 30% capacity and is expected to be capable of supporting the planned growth of the community for the next 20+ years without need of expansion.

STORMWATER MANAGEMENT

Middletown has an antiquated and inadequate storm water management system with little or no capabilities to manage even minimal runoff.



Geographically built atop a north-south oriented ridge that stretches the length of Church Street, water is drained/channeled into either open roadside ditches to the east or into five storm water culverts running under Main Street extending into another series of open ditches to the west. An extensive, integrated storm water management system with containment ponds and/or rain gardens needs to be studied, funded, engineered and constructed to ensure Middletown continues to

meet the strict standards set by the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Implementation Plan.

WATER INDEPENDENCE

All drinking water is purchased from a sole source, the City of Winchester which draws the water from the Shenandoah River just south of Middletown. Because of the need to replace its own aging water infrastructure and other civic projects, the cost of water from Winchester continues to rise dramatically. An older Town well cannot be used, as it was capped in the early 1950s and now no longer meets Virginia Department of Health standards.

The need for identifying additional water supplies is becoming apparent throughout the Shenandoah Valley as demand is placing stress on the existing sources of supply.

As an example, joint land use studies with Frederick County (see appendix) clearly state that existing limitations in water availability and the size of conveyance lines east under I-81, may hinder timely development of the proposed boundary adjustment properties, Reliance Road Area, in the very near future. As of this writing, the Town is only positioned to dedicate a maximum of 18,000



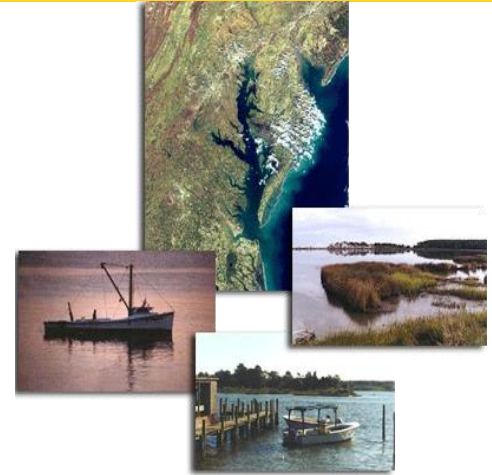
gallons per day (gpd) from its current Winchester allotment for property development. This would facilitate a limited initial commercial development to include a planned hotel, expanded Exxon Service Center and restaurant. Any additional commercial expansion would be predicated on obtaining additional water.

The most economical source could be wells. USGS studies indicate adequate ground water availability and the Town needs to program funding for a test well to determine quality and flow quantity. Future requirements needed to utilize this resource would include a \$1.5 million water tower, a treatment system, and most importantly, land on which to drill a well and construct the tower. This does not preclude continuing research to identify other sources such as fresh water springs, quarries, etc.



WATER DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM

Middletown’s water distribution infrastructure is dated and in poor repair. Although all of the water metering devices are current, most of the mains and laterals date back into the early 1950s. As of this writing, over \$400,000 needs to be programmed to replace and upgrade aging lines.



CHESAPEAKE BAY PRESERVATION ACT

The Commonwealth of Virginia enacted the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act, an act intended to protect the water quality of the Chesapeake Bay and any and all tributaries flowing into the bay. Middletown’s storm water runoff and effluent from its waste water treatment plant empties into Meadow Brook which flows through Middletown and the Cedar Creek and Belle Grove National Historical Park, empties into Cedar Creek, the north fork of the Shenandoah River, the Potomac River, and eventually the bay itself. Section 10.1-2100 of the Virginia Code requires Middletown to incorporate general water quality protection measures into the comprehensive plan, zoning ordinances, and subdivision ordinances. Although the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) has designated Cedar Creek as an impaired waterway, Middletown has not been identified as a contributing factor. It is important to the health of the Chesapeake Bay that Middletown, along with other communities, aggressively continues to seek to reduce or eliminate pollutants with a potential for a negative impact on these waters.

GOALS AND STRATEGIES

OVERVIEW

One of the most important parts of a comprehensive plan is the preparation of policy statements called goals and strategies. Goals state the general manner and direction in which residents would like to see the town develop. Strategies are more detailed statements showing how to help achieve the goals.

There are two overall policies that impact the future of Middletown: Middletown should expect moderate residential, commercial and industrial growth while maintaining its rich small-town character. Most if not all industrial growth should occur outside of the historic district; and, elected and appointed officials should, through the planning process; as implemented through this Comprehensive Plan, a Capital Improvement Plan and related ordinances, maintain an adequate level of community facilities and services for the health, safety and general well-being of the residents of the town and surrounding area.

EXPAND CORPORATE LIMITS ACROSS I-81

Goal: Working cooperatively with Frederick County and affected land owners, Middletown will complete a Boundary Adjustment east across I-81 along Reliance Road and bring approximately 250 acres into Middletown’s corporate limits.

Strategy A: Develop a long term plan to provide for adequate water and sewage resources.

Strategy B: Develop and implement appropriate zoning ordinances to implement the adopted land use plan.

Strategy C: Design and construct pedestrian walk-ways that allow for full integration between parcels on either side of I-81.

Strategy D: Coordinate closely with Frederick County and VDOT to ensure optimum traffic flow design and management as build out



progresses.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

GOAL: The town will attract and maintain a desired mix of business establishments, and ensure that the business types, their scale, and their locations are in conformance with the planning policies.

Strategy A: For each area of town targeted for business development (for example, downtown core, I-81 Interchange areas), develop a comprehensive list of business types generally regarded as desirable and in conformance with the planning policies.

Strategy B: Define and implement steps to encourage business development, including marketing and advertising, financial incentives, grant/loan acquisition, and working with other organizations in the northern Shenandoah Valley

Strategy C: Develop a process to encourage adaptive reuse of under-utilized or unused structures within the existing town. In conjunction with Strategies A and B, this may entail

working with a property owner to attract a specific business to a specific location.

Strategy D: Establish planning/economic development position within the town government.

STREETS, STREET LIGHTING AND SIDEWALKS

Goal: Middletown will construct sidewalks and add street lighting throughout the community to enhance pedestrian safety and develop a sense of “connectivity.” Traffic control devices will be installed where appropriate.

Strategy A: Provide, through systematic planning and prioritization, a system of sidewalks throughout the town. Evaluate pedestrian traffic flow to determine where sidewalks are most needed; to include sidewalks along Main Street to both the north and south corporate boundaries.

Strategy B: Enact appropriate ordinances to transfer the responsibility for sidewalk maintenance from the town to the adjoining property owners.

Strategy C: In partnership with Lord Fairfax Community College, provide a walking path to the college from the town boundary to provide pedestrian safety and access to recreation.

Strategy D: Incorporate the sidewalk map and priority list into the Capital Improvement Plan and relevant ordinances.

Strategy E: Enact ordinances to require new development to install appropriate sidewalks and street lighting.

Strategy F: Redirect Lord Fairfax Community College (LFCC) student generated traffic exiting I-81 away from Main Street. Connect Carolyn Avenue with Skirmisher Lane on the LFCC campus via an elongated traffic circle at the current intersection of Reliance Road and Carolyn Avenue

Strategy G: Install a traffic signal at the intersection of Routes 11 (Main St.) and 627 (Reliance Rd.)

PARKS AND RECREATION FACILITIES

Goal: Parks will have been expanded to meet population growth.

Strategy A: Additional parkland is needed on the East side of Main Street to serve residents and avoid crossing Main Street. Neither major equipment nor buildings are necessary. At least 2 or 3 playgrounds for public use should be incorporated into newly developed areas .

Strategy B: Install tree screening as needed on the West side of the existing park to screen the expanded wastewater treatment plant.

Strategy C: Include requirements for parkland, open space and equipment in revised and updated zoning, subdivision and other relevant ordinances.

STORM WATER MANAGEMENT

Goal: Comprehensive storm water management initiatives will be in place to mitigate flooding and potential damage to property, structures and public facilities.

Strategy A: Develop a map of existing and needed storm water management routes and structures.

Strategy B: To prevent water from collecting on streets, provide drainage at driveways that presently have none through partnering with adjoining property owners and VDOT where appropriate.

Strategy C: Coordinate with VDOT to address existing problems on Main Street as well

as streets and driveways intersecting with Main Street.

Strategy D: Incorporate storm water management map and priority list into the Capital Improvement Plan and relevant ordinances.

Strategy E: Enact or otherwise implement best practices for the design and engineering of storm water management facilities, independently or in cooperation with Frederick County.

PROPERTY MAINTENANCE

Goal: Properties will be properly maintained to protect public health, safety and promote the general well being of residents.

Strategy A: Enforce the existing code and enact additional ordinances as may be required.

ZONING ADMINISTRATION AND ENFORCEMENT

Goal: Zoning code provisions, site plan agreements and special use permit terms will be consistently enforced in order to protect public health, safety and ensure compliance.

Strategy A: The zoning administrator, together with appropriate town officials and staff should review all business use at least annually to determine whether the use and conditions are in compliance with the relevant approvals.

Strategy B: Develop and implement an appropriate record keeping system documenting zoning and related actions by the town.

HISTORIC DISTRICT

Goal: Historic district assets will continue to be viable components of the Town’s fabric.

Strategy A: Foster programs that encourage maintenance, renovation and re-use of historic structures.

Strategy B: Foster ongoing dialog among residents, town officials, property owners and experts to understand the need to retain historic assets.

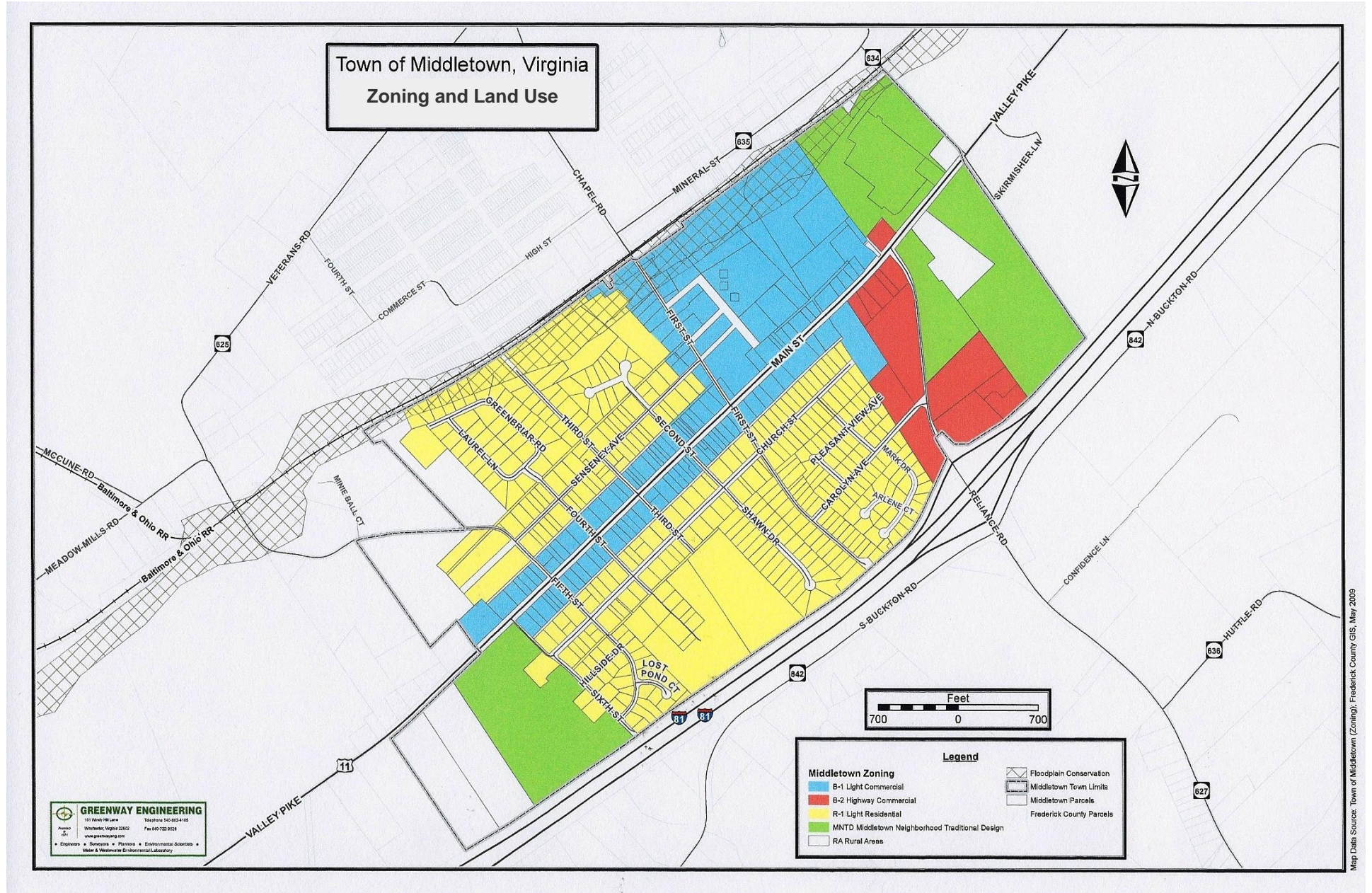


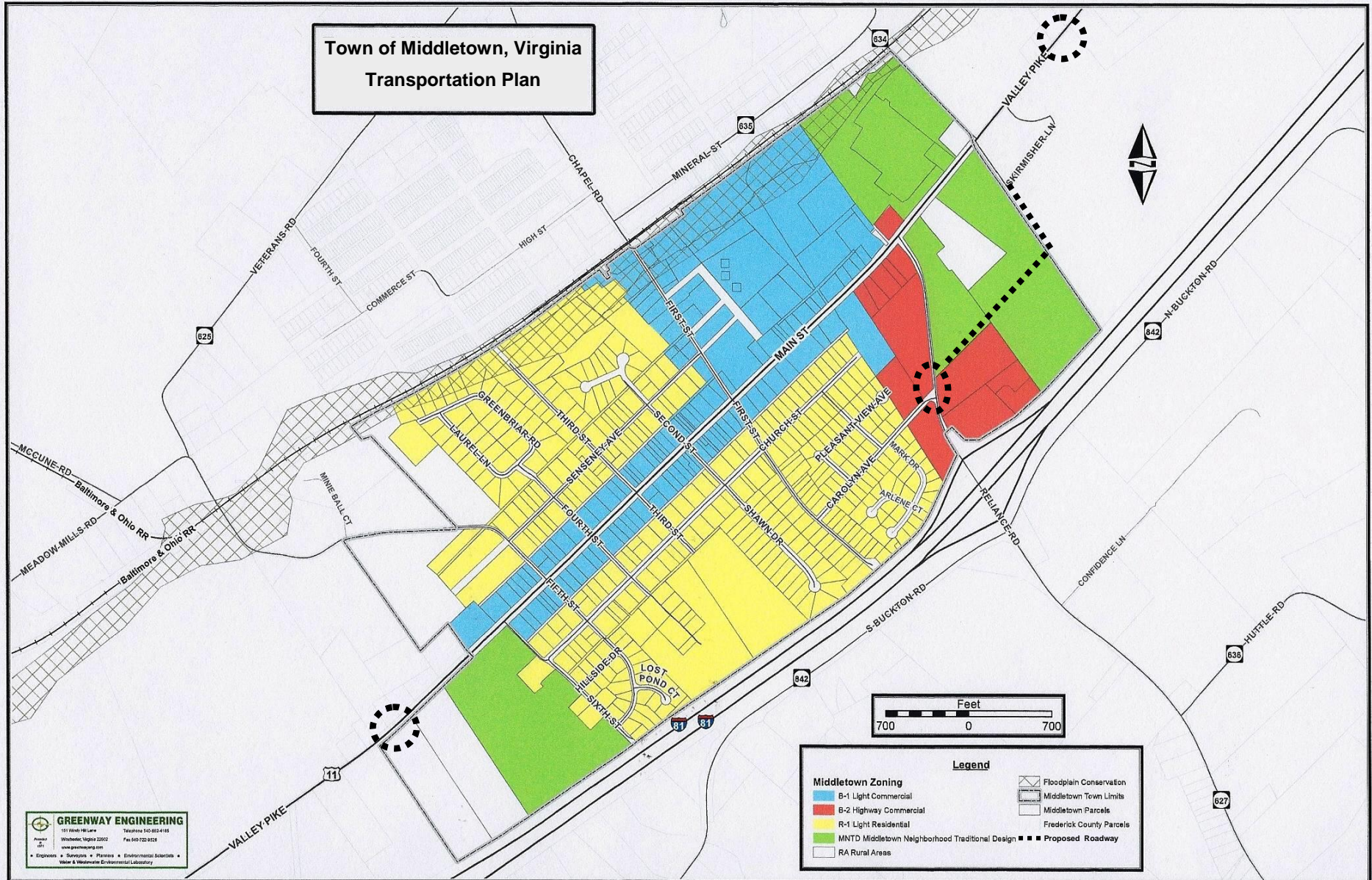
Strategy C: Encourage the Middletown Heritage Committee and other similar organizations to continue and expand its programs such as the Walking Tour.

WATER INDEPENDENCE

Goal: The Town will produce its own drinking water and sell excess to outside accounts.

Strategy A: Implement a program to bring on line sufficient fresh water wells and treatment facilities to meet current and future demands.





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Map Data Source: Town of Middletown (Zoning), Frederick County GIS, May 2009

RELIANCE ROAD AREA LAND USE PLAN

In spring 2010, the Town of Middletown expressed interest in expanding its boundaries to incorporate approximately 250 acres of land on the east side of I-81, Exit 302, following Reliance Road. Shortly thereafter, the Reliance Road Steering Committee (RRSC) was convened. The RRSC was composed of representatives from the Town Council and the Board of Supervisors.

The RRSC met various times over the ensuing months. The Town representatives also held a community meeting and met with individual property owners within the study area to gain an understanding of the interest of the property owners in terms of the Town's desired boundary line adjustment with the County, as well as future land use opportunities. These meetings were summarized and presented to the RRSC by Town representatives. It was noted that while approximately 37 acres of B2 Business General Zoning exists within the study area, only one site has been developed and benefits from the Town's water and sewer system: the 2.7 acre site occupied by an existing Exxon service station.

The RRSC also evaluated the existing transportation network in addition to water and sewer availability. The RRSC considered the Foresight Middletown plan (adopted into the Town's Comprehensive Plan in 2005), which promoted the implementation of a technology park east of the interstate. The results of these findings led to the crafting of the Reliance Road Area Land Use Plan as a means to illustrate the potential land uses, and the supporting transportation and public water and sewer for the area, to foster further discussions.

The land use plan is envisioned to guide land use decisions for an area of approximately 311 acres over the next 20 to 30 years. Recognizing the Town's current water availability, development

within the study area will initially be limited until all additional water supply is more readily available. Additionally, policy enabling the Town to provide water and sewer service to the County properties would require Board approval,

LAND USE

The proximity of the study area to I-81, Exit 302, enhances the opportunities for land uses that benefit from the interstate. As such, commercial and technology uses would be most beneficial at this location.

The plan calls for the establishment of approximately 44 acres of commercial uses that serve the traveling public, such as hotels, gasoline service stations and restaurants. The commercial opportunities would be located immediately east of the interstate interchange on the north and south sides of Reliance Road. This is also the area where public water and sewer presently serve the existing Exxon service station. These land uses could be implemented through the B2 Business General Zoning District.

Technology uses are envisioned both north and south of Reliance Road, covering approximately 259 acres. Based on the targeted businesses identified by the Winchester-Frederick County Economic Development Commission, the technology uses would include economic sectors such as: Advanced Security, Assembly, Business Services, and Life Sciences. These land uses would be implemented through the OM Office Manufacturing Zoning District.

In recognition of the continuation of the agricultural and large lot residential land uses adjacent to the study area, efforts should be implemented through the rezoning and development process that mitigate and lessen the adverse impacts that the commercial and technological uses may introduce. Mitigation techniques such as 100-foot distance

buffers and landscape screening would be expected.

TRANSPORTATION

While the existence of I-81, Exit 302, is a strong asset to the area's transportation network, the actual configuration of the interchange and its close proximity to Buckton Road is not conducive to accommodating future traffic demands. In order for the interchange to operate efficiently and effectively in the future, it is essential to migrate the existing intersection of Reliance and Buckton Roads further east, creating a greater separation distance from the I-81 northbound on/off ramps. Increasing this separation distance will avoid significant degradation of the interchange, similar to what has occurred at Exit 307 in Stephens City.

In rapidly growing areas, as noted in the Foresight Middletown plan; controlling and coordinating the number, design and location of new access points to major roadways is critical to maintaining the safety and capacity of the road system as traffic volumes increase. Accordingly, access to Reliance Road should be managed and limited. The plan calls for limiting Reliance Road access to three points: a managed access entrance point in the vicinity of Confidence Lane, and two appropriately spaced roundabout or signalized intersections.

The initial access point onto Reliance Road would be established with the relocation of Buckton Road. A second access point onto Reliance Road would be established with the relocation of Huttle Road, to create a single intersection on Reliance Road for relocating Huttle Road and a new road servicing the southern land area.

These three Reliance Road access points would facilitate traffic movement to/from Reliance Road to the various future land uses to the north and south.

It may also be appropriate to utilize a roundabout at the relocated Buckton Road intersection with Reliance Road as a means to define where the developed portion of Reliance Road ends and the rural land uses of the County begin. A similar technique was suggested by the Foresight Middletown plan as a means to create an entrance to the developed area.

Finally, the Foresight Middletown plan calls for Reliance Road within the Town limits to be a boulevard with a landscaped median: the Reliance Road Area Land Use Plan carries this design concept forward east of the interstate.

Consistent application of Comprehensive Plan Goals to achieve an acceptable level of service on area roads and overall transportation network, level of service C or better, should be promoted. Further, efforts should be made to ensure that additional degradation of the transportation beyond an acceptable level of service shall be avoided. Consideration of future development applications within the study area should only occur when an acceptable level of service has been achieved and key elements and connections identified in this plan have been provided.

WATER AND SEWER

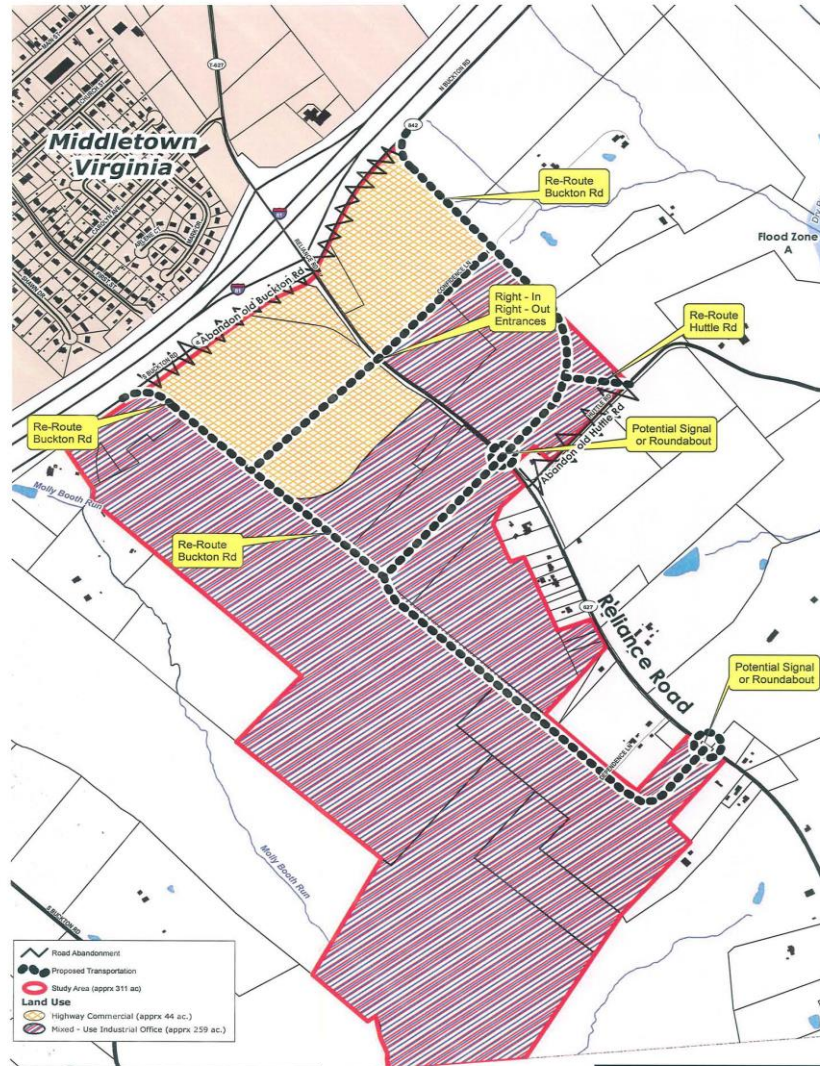
The Town recently completed an upgrade to its wastewater treatment facility which enables it to treat upwards of 400,000 gpd. Reflective of the slowing economy and the Town's limited water availability, the

wastewater facility is currently operating at less than 30 percent capacity; the facility is available to service future wastewater demands.

Existing limitations in water availability and the conveyance lines under the interstate may hinder development in the near future. As the Town secures additional water availability, upgrades to the conveyance system could easily be undertaken.

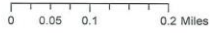
Reflective of current water availability, the Town is positioned to dedicate up to 18,000 gpd of water to development on the east side of I-81. This available water resource could facilitate an initial expansion of the commercial land uses to include a hotel, expanded gasoline service station/ convenience center, and a restaurant. Any additional commercial uses would certainly warrant additional water resources.

Development of the technology park land uses will be limited until additional water resources are identified and available. Technology uses that require limited water resources would certainly be more desirable initially, until the expanded water supply has been secured and accessible.



- 1) There is potential that additional through lanes would be needed depending upon the scope of development.
- 2) This change would require a traffic study under chapter 527. This study would give the needed information to refine roadway system improvement expectations.

Area Plan
Reliance Road Area
Land Use Plan



2030 Comprehensive Policy Plan Map
Approved: xxxxxxxx, 2011
DRAFT

Adopted and included as an amendment to the Frederick County, Virginia, Comprehensive Plan on December 14, 2011

IMPLEMENTATION TOOLS

The preparation of a Comprehensive Plan for Middletown is only the beginning of the planning process. The recommendations and goals in the report can only be achieved through a program of implementation.

This appendix describes the legal, financial, and administrative tools, which can be used to carry out the proposals presented.

While cooperation between government and the private sector is essential to accomplish the recommendations of this report, the following paragraphs will stress Town government's important role in the implementation process.

Legal Implementation

- **Subdivision Regulations** - These are locally adopted laws, which control the conversion of open-space land into building sites. New development is prohibited until the Town Council approves a plat of the proposed changes. Approval is based upon compliance with all standards set forth in the subdivision regulations. The standards provide for platting procedure, lot sizes, street standards, utility easements and setback related regulations for the orderly development of subdivision areas.

These regulations serve many purposes. To the developer they become a protection against substandard competitors, which may destroy the value of surrounding areas. It affords a convenient step in securing adequate land title record for tax officials. The consumers are assured they will receive a buildable lot with adequate facilities. For everyone, the regulations protect against undesirable development that could be financially burdensome due to improvements and/or services that the town may be compelled to provide. Middletown adopted a subdivision ordinance in

1977. This ordinance should be reviewed and revised as needed.

- **Zoning Ordinance** - Zoning is the legal method of imposing conditions on the development of land and establishing controls on land use, building use, building size, building height, area, lot sizes, bulk and location of structures. The purpose of zoning is to control the development of vacant land. It has no direct effect upon existing land use and structures, however, as buildings are removed, modified or have a change of use, properties that do not conform then to the ordinance can gradually be brought into conformance with current policy. This characteristic enables zoning to be one of the most important tools available for implementing the land use portion of the Middletown Comprehensive Plan.

Middletown adopted a zoning ordinance in 1967. It represents what the town thought was the best use of its land. The zoning ordinance should be updated regularly to keep abreast of changing laws. It is the responsibility of the Middletown Planning Commission to review existing planning policy and recommend appropriate changes. It is important for the zoning map and land use plans to conform. This will help achieve the goals of the Comprehensive Plan, since the plan has no direct power to control development.

- **Other Legal Devices** - There are a number of other legal controls available. A few of these are: sanitary codes, nuisance ordinances and housing codes. Controls such as these will help Middletown attain the goals of the plan and they should be enacted as the need arises.

Financial Implementation

- **State-Federal Aid** - Some state and federal aid (primarily in the form of loans and technical assistance) is available to municipalities for community improvements. The following

publication should be consulted for information on possible aid programs: Catalogue of Federal Assistance Programs, office of Management and Budget (Washington, D.C., U.S. Government Printing Office). Also, additional state and foundation publications can be accessed on the Internet.

Current programs of importance to Middletown include but are not limited to:

- **Cops Program** - This program is used to fund salaries for additional police personnel.

- **Virginia Community Development Block Grants (VCDBG)**- This program, which was formerly administered by the Federal Department of Housing and Urban Development, has as its goal the improvement of the economic and physical environment in Virginia communities and neighborhoods for the primary benefit of low and moderate-income citizens. The program's three major objectives are to assist local governments in:

- Increasing business and employment opportunities.
- Conserving and improving housing conditions.
- Improving the availability and adequacy of community facilities.

- **Division of Motor Vehicle Grants** - Funds available through the Virginia Division of Motor Vehicles to fund salaries for additional police personnel and for the purchase of traffic control devices and alcohol detection devices such as radar and breathalyzers.

- **Fire Administration Grants** - This grant is used to upgrade equipment within fire departments such as breathing apparatuses, protective equipment for firemen and training.

- **Authorities** - An authority is a public corporation organized by a municipality under state enabling legislation to carry on a specific function outside the regular structure of government. There are various kinds of authorities including, but not limited to, those for schools, water, sewers, parking and airports.

Authorities are formed by communities because of the high cost of needed projects and limited resources available. Too often, public improvements are necessary but the municipality does not have the current revenue to finance such improvements. With authorities, the borrowing power of the county, city or town is not used; it is rather the estimated cost of, and revenues from, the proposed projects that form the base for the bond issue.

Middletown is permitted by State law to issue bonds for borrowing money. The money, with interest, is repaid from future revenues. Because population growth has increased demands for community facilities, the expanded use of bonds for major projects should be considered. While it is cheaper to pay for major improvements out of current revenue, it is unlikely that the Town will be able to build up enough reserves to establish a “pay as you go” capital improvements program. Additionally, a bond will assure that future residents who will be using the facility will bear some of the cost.

Administrative Implementation

- **Continuing Comprehensive Planning** - The Comprehensive Plan serves a number of purposes:

- It presents a framework of desirable short, medium and long-range development for Middletown and provides a systematic guide for the Town Council to review projects.

- It enables the Town Council and residents to consider and develop definite policies, which would lead to a specific pattern of future physical development.
- It is an inventory of existing community facilities and a source of information concerning economic and social conditions.
- It assists those involved in the planning process in relation to the social and economic issues involved in problems of physical development.
- It serves as a guide for the zoning ordinance and should assist local officials in making future zoning changes.

To be successful, a Comprehensive Plan must be implemented as well as adopted. The residents of Middletown should understand and support their plan. The plan should reflect the general goals of the people as well as the economic and social forces shaping the physical land uses in the Town. The town should review and revise this plan as the need arises.

- **Capital Improvement Program** - The orderly determination and scheduling of major public improvements for a period, usually five years into the future, is called a Capital Improvement Plan (CIP).

Towns often find it necessary to spend large sums of money to provide the facilities needed to serve its residents. Major public improvements such as water and sewer systems are called capital improvements.

Few jurisdictions have enough money at any one time to meet all demands for new or enlarged improvements. Therefore, it's important that all public projects be prioritized and developed as part of a long-range program. Cost estimates for each proposal as well as estimates for future expenses

and revenues including grant money should be prepared. Projects are selected after the need and cost of individual proposals are determined. A schedule is then made for the beginning and completion of the chosen improvements. A capital budget should be prepared annually detailing those projects to be undertaken during the first year of the five-year capital program. This budget serves as the annual implementation of the CIP. The CIP is a major tool for guiding public improvements along desirable channels and for insuring that they proceed in an orderly manner.

It requires operating departments and elected officials to plan for the future and to anticipate capital expenditures, thus establishing a sound basis for budget decisions. Substantial savings may occur by providing more efficient use of equipment through long-range scheduling.

Most importantly, capital improvement planning provides an opportunity to spread the cost of improvements over a period of years, avoiding the great tax increases that are often caused by postponing community responsibilities.

Reference: Code of Virginia, 15.2-2239

SUMMARY

Reference to the Middletown Comprehensive Plan and implementation of its provisions is part of an on-going process. Review and modification of ordinances and codes may also be necessary to bring about the recommendations of this plan. Assistance from many levels of both governmental and non-governmental groups will be important in implementation. The goals of this plan cannot be fully attained unless local officials and citizens work together to understand and solve, and to guide development in accordance with the Comprehensive Plan, which aspires for the common good.

