

About the Plan

What is a Comprehensive Plan?

A comprehensive plan is a community's "blueprint" for the future. It is the vision of what a community wants to become and the steps needed to realize that vision.

Specifically it is:

- An official policy document adopted by a local government. It's the broadest policy document a community can have.
- Used to guide decision-making on long-term physical, social and economic development of the municipality and its environs.
- Comprised of policy statements, principles, goals, objectives, strategies and maps
- Implemented over time through many distinct decisions including annual budgeting, department work programs, and development decisions.
- Required by West Virginia state code for all municipalities that have zoning and subdivision regulations. Since 2004, the law requires plans to be updated every ten years.*

* Previously adopted plans (i.e. Morgantown's 1999 Comprehensive Plan) must be updated by the end of 2014.

Plan Organization

The Comprehensive Plan is organized into nine chapters. The chapters listed below in bold are the plan's core elements, which each include a goal, followed by a set of objectives and strategies.

1. Introduction
2. Regional Vision
- 3. Land Management***
- 4. Transportation**
- 5. Environment**
- 6. Neighborhoods and Housing**
- 7. Community Facilities and Services**
- 8. Economic Development**
9. Implementation



*The Land Management element includes two key policy maps and a set of principles.

Principles: Statements of intent that describe "how" (character attributes) and "where" (conceptual location) development should occur. Similar principles appear within the Regional Vision chapter and reflect regional values. The Principles in Land Management apply specifically to Morgantown.



An Unprecedented Collaboration

In late 2011 and early 2012, the City of Morgantown, Town of Star City, and the Morgantown Monongalia Metropolitan Planning Organization (MMMPO) embarked in an unprecedented collaborative effort to develop a shared vision for the future of the region. The process, called "Crossroads — It's Time to Chart Our Future," engaged a diverse group of stakeholders, citizens and community leaders in identifying needs, aspirations and the preferred direction of future growth for Monongalia County. The vision serves as a foundation for three plans: the City of Morgantown's Comprehensive Plan, the Town of Star City's Comprehensive Plan, and the regional Long Range Transportation Plan for the MMMPO.



Public Input and The Vision

The Process

The Crossroads vision process included four rounds of public involvement opportunities: 1) Stakeholder Interviews, 2) Idea Gathering Workshops, 3) Understanding Future Growth Workshop, and 4) Community Choices Workshop. Everyone with an interest in the future of Greater Morgantown was invited to attend the public workshops.



Vision for the Morgantown Region

Growing...

Managed growth that is efficient, attractive, and well-connected through appropriate infrastructure, will balance land consumption with redevelopment while protecting and preserving open space, local agriculture, energy resources and the environment.

Moving...

A balanced, safe, attractive, and accessible transportation system will reduce congestion, improve connectivity and support and direct future growth integrating private vehicles and expanding public transportation, biking, and walking networks.

Living...

Job and income growth, improved community services, support for the arts, accessible and connected parks and recreational facilities, good schools, desirable, diverse, and affordable housing, and safe neighborhoods that have access to local shops and markets, will be hallmarks of our region's quality of life.

Competing...

A regional approach to economic development and infrastructure investments that is founded on cooperative relationships will make the region competitive and capable of attracting and supporting existing and new businesses.

Collaborating...

An engaged community with leaders that embrace continued citizen engagement and stronger collaboration among municipalities, the county, the State, WVU, neighborhoods and major employers will enable the sharing of resources and lead to successful implementation.

Principles for Growth

- Infill development and redevelopment of underutilized and/or deteriorating sites takes priority over development in remote greenfield locations.
- Expansion of the urban area will occur in a contiguous pattern that favors areas already served by existing infrastructure.
- Future growth in rural areas will conserve open space, preserve sensitive natural features, and respect significant viewsheds.
- Quality design is emphasized for all uses to create an attractive, distinctive public and private realm and promote positive perceptions of the region.
- Development that integrates mixed-uses (residential, commercial, institutional, civic etc.) and connects with the existing urban fabric is encouraged.
- Development that integrates mixed-uses (residential, commercial, institutional, civic etc.) and connects with the existing urban fabric is encouraged.
- Residential development will support the formation of complete neighborhoods with diverse housing, pedestrian-scale streets, integrated public spaces, connection to adjacent neighborhoods, and access to transportation alternatives and basic retail needs.
- A broad range of housing types, price levels and occupancy types will provide desirable living options for a diverse population.
- Parks, open space, and recreational areas are incorporated as part of future development.
- Environmentally sensitive and sustainable practices will be encouraged in future developments.

Principles of Land Management

Eleven Principles describe the intent about “how” (character attributes) and “where” (conceptual location) growth and development in Morgantown should occur. They reflect a variety of land management themes that are mutually reinforcing, including the quality, appearance, pattern, character, and organization of development, environmental quality, efficient use of infrastructure, and expanding connectivity and mobility choices for residents.

1. Infill development and redevelopment of underutilized and/or deteriorating sites takes priority over development in greenfield locations at the city’s edge.

It is preferable to accommodate growth within the existing urban area in locations that are appropriate for and can support increased development densities. Infill and redevelopment will occur in a strategic manner that considers community needs like access to amenities, transportation service and the quality and quantity of open space.

2. Expansion of the urban area will occur in a contiguous pattern that favors areas already served by existing infrastructure.

To the extent that outward expansion of the urban area occurs, it should progress in a concentric pattern, emphasizing areas relatively nearest to the City’s geographic center. Development should promote responsible management of the region’s transportation and utility infrastructure, and help to provide services efficiently by preferring sites that are supported by existing capacity.

3. Downtown, adjacent neighborhoods and the riverfront will be the primary focus for revitalization efforts.

The city will continue to invest in strengthening Downtown and adjacent areas as the civic, commercial, and cultural core of the region.

4. Existing neighborhoods throughout the city will be maintained and/or enhanced.

The city will continue to invest and to encourage private investment all neighborhoods that strengthens their existing character and value through maintenance and improvements of properties, infrastructure and civic amenities.

5. Quality design is emphasized for all uses to create an attractive, distinctive public and private realm and promote positive perceptions of the region.

Public areas (streets, sidewalks, parks, and street trees, etc.) and private areas (building facades, lawns, landscaping, parking lots and driveways, etc.) are planned and designed to balance function, appearance, and affordability, while allowing for creative differences, innovation, and diversity of design.

6. Development that integrates mixed-uses (residential, commercial, institutional, civic etc.) and connects with the existing urban fabric is encouraged.

Places are created with multiple uses—residential, commercial, and institutional, among others—in proximity to each other, perhaps on the same site and/or in the same structure. Close attention is given to the compatibility of those uses and their surroundings. Uses are arranged in a manner that maximizes pedestrian activity.

7. Places will be better connected to improve the function of the street network and create more opportunities to walk, bike and access public transportation throughout the region.

While the region’s topography is a challenge to creating an ideal level of street connectivity, opportunities will be sought to improve the street pattern and thereby increase travel options, potentially decrease vehicle miles, reduce congestion and improve wayfinding.

8. A broad range of housing types, price levels and occupancy types will provide desirable living options for a diverse population.

Housing in Morgantown will continue to be diverse in type (single-family and multi-family, detached and attached, etc.) and offer options for both ownership and rental occupancy at a wide range of price levels.

9. Residential development will support the formation of complete neighborhoods with diverse housing, pedestrian-scale streets, integrated public spaces, connection to adjacent neighborhoods, and access to transportation alternatives and basic retail needs.

Complete neighborhoods include a variety of land uses (residential, commercial, civic and recreational areas), building types, and housing types; have an identifiable center that offers basic services such as grocery stores and specialty shops; support a variety of travel options; are well-connected to adjacent neighborhoods and districts; and seamlessly integrate diverse, multi-generational residents living in proximity to one another.

10. Parks, open space, and recreational areas are incorporated as part of future development.

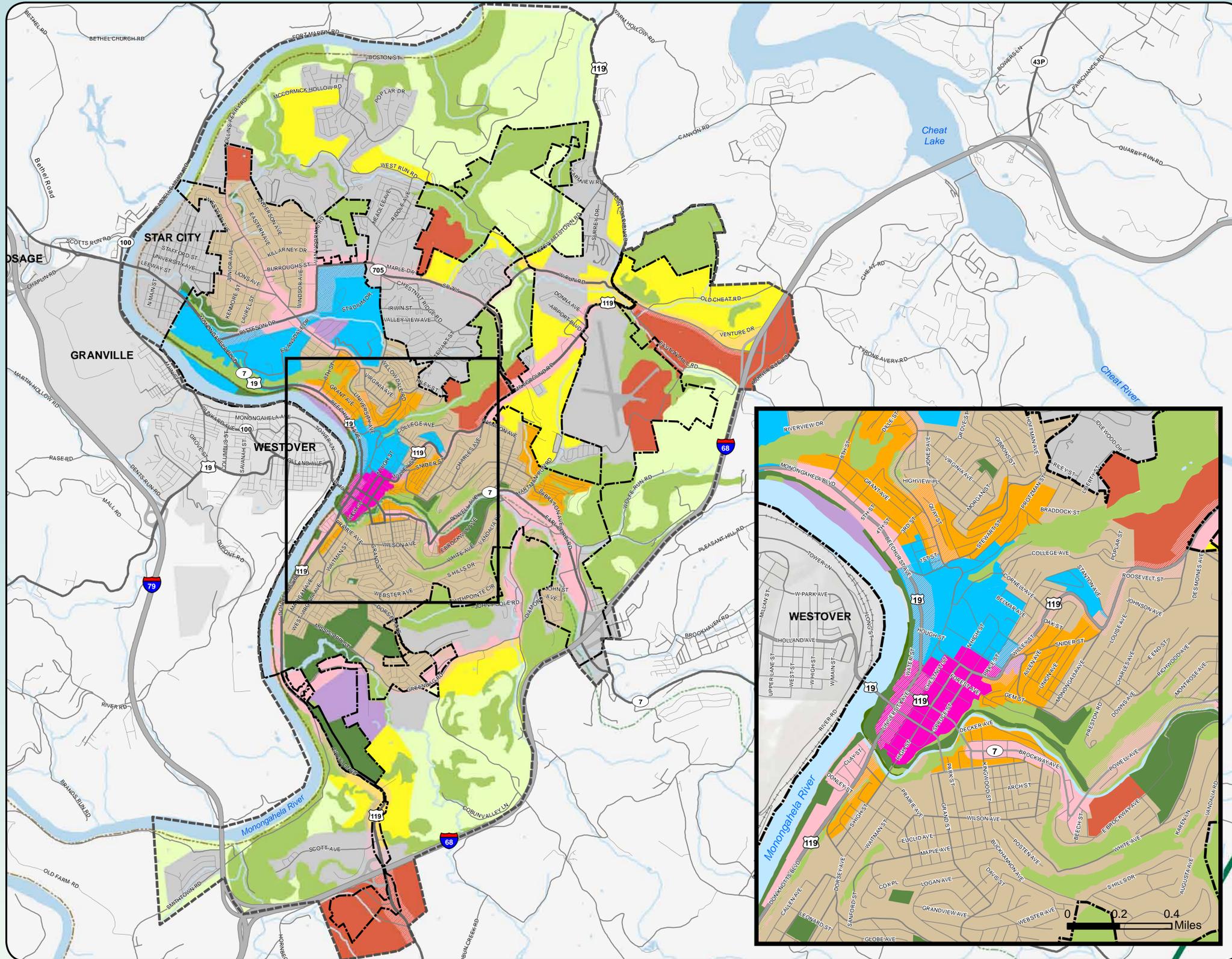
Future development will contribute to expanding the quantity, quality, access to, and connections between the region’s parks, open space, and recreational amenities.

11. Environmentally sensitive and sustainable practices will be encouraged in future developments.

Development will be designed to reduce potentially negative impacts on environmental features such as steep slopes, stream corridors, wetlands, and significant stands of mature trees. “Green” building methods will be encouraged.

These principles should be used to help guide the city on how to use land resources in a more efficient and effective manner to foster a high quality community with a distinct sense of place.

Land Management Map



The Land Management Map illustrates where the Principles could be implemented, identifying areas where urban expansion, infill and redevelopment are appropriate and where existing areas (both developed and undeveloped) should be protected from significant change.

GENERAL CONCEPT AREAS

CONSERVATION (maintain and Protect)

- Preserve:** Land that is permanently protected by regulations or ownership such as nature preserves, recreational open space and public parks.
- Reserve:** Undeveloped land with significant environmental constraints (steep slopes, floodplain, mature forest) or farmland that is likely to remain as open space or an agricultural use. These areas may be subject to development and should be considered for preservation.
- Neighborhood Conservation*:** Preservation of existing neighborhood character and continued maintenance of buildings and infrastructure.
- Limited Growth / Conservation Development:** Primarily rural areas that have value as open space but are subject to development. To the extent that development occurs, it should be clustered to retain open space and protect significant environmental features.

DEVELOPMENT (Infill, Redevelopment, Expansion)

- Downtown Enhancement:** Continued infill and redevelopment in the Downtown core with a mix of employment, civic, commercial and residential uses as described in the 2010 Downtown Strategic Plan Update.
- Corridor Enhancement**:** Improving development along corridors with a mix of uses, increased intensity at major nodes or intersections and roadway improvements to improve traffic flow, pedestrian and biking experience.
- WVU Campus Development:** Growth within WVU's campus areas that supports the University's functions. Development may include a mix of institutional, residential, civic and commercial uses.
- Neighborhood Revitalization:** Stabilization and reinvestment in existing neighborhoods that includes improvements to public and private buildings and infrastructure, and support for infill development, adaptive reuse and redevelopment that offers a mix of residential types and supporting uses.
- Infill and Redevelopment*:** Existing developed sites or districts that are underutilized or functionally obsolete, where infill development or redevelopment that is consistent with the surrounding context is appropriate.
- Encouraged growth:** Areas where new growth is encouraged primarily for economic development. These areas may be special districts or mixed-use areas.
- Controlled growth / Traditional Neighborhood Area*:** Areas where growth is not strongly encouraged but where mixed-use development could be supported because of proximity to planned or existing roadways and utilities. Appropriate development may include a traditional neighborhood pattern (walkable with a distinct center and edge), an open space development pattern, or special use districts. Care should be taken to ensure that new development is compatible with existing development patterns in the area.

OTHER MAP AREAS

- Developed Areas:** Other existing developed areas where neither a conservation nor development intent applies.
- Areas of Opportunity:** Area where a more specific development intent applies (see handout).

**Hatched areas indicate opportunities for corridor enhancement within another concept area.

Development Types and Land Uses

Concept Area	Appropriate Development Types										
	SF	TF	MF	C	NX	UC	CC	O	I	CD	OS
Core Enhancement			•	•	•	•					•
Corridor Enhancement*			•	•	•		•	•			•
WVU Campus Development		•	•	•	•	•		•	•		•
Neighborhood Revitalization	•	•	•	•	•						•
Infill and Redevelopment*			•	•	•	•		•			•
Encouraged Growth			•	•	•	•		•	•		•
Controlled Growth	•	•	•	•	•			•	•	•	•
Neighborhood Conservation*	•	•	•	•	•						•
Limited Growth	•			•						•	•
Preserve											•
Reserve											•

The matrix to the left indicates the development types that are generally appropriate in each concept area on the Land Management Map. These development types are described below.

• *Neighborhood Conservation is a concept intended to maintain and protect existing neighborhoods. Multi-family residential may be appropriate in these areas if such development currently exists there. Multi-family residential is not appropriate for many Neighborhood Conservation areas.*

* Appropriate development depends on existing context. See Development Patterns and Character within the draft plan.

DEVELOPMENT TYPES AND LAND USES

Development Type descriptions	Pattern and Character Examples
SF Single Family Residential Detached 1-2.5 story residential structures each intended for one family. Densities range from three to twelve units per acre.	
TF Two Family Residential Detached structures that each contain two separate residential dwellings. May be built in a similar pattern as single family and integrated in neighborhoods with other single family structures. Densities range from six to twenty units per acre.	
MF Multi-family Residential Includes various forms such as townhouses and apartment buildings where three or more separate residential dwelling units are within a structure. Gross residential densities range from six to twenty units per acre.	
C Civic and Institutional These sites include both public uses (government buildings, libraries, community recreation centers, police and fire stations, and schools) and semi-public or private uses (universities, churches, hospital campuses). Public uses should be strategically located and integrated with surrounding development. Civic and Institutional sites may be distinctive from surrounding buildings in their architecture or relationship to the street.	

Development Type descriptions	Pattern and Character Examples
NX Neighborhood Center Mixed Use A mix of housing, office, commercial, and civic uses adjacent to one another or contained within the same structure (such as offices or apartments above ground-floor retail). Such uses should be compatible with and primarily serve nearby neighborhoods (within 1/2 mile). Parking should be located behind or to the side of buildings and may be shared between multiple uses.	
UC Urban Center Mixed Use A mix of housing, office, commercial, and civic uses located adjacent to one another or sharing the same building. Buildings are generally larger in scale than neighborhood mixed use and contain more employment and commercial uses that serve the broader community. Buildings should be located near the street with parking provided on-street or in shared parking configurations behind or between buildings.	
CC Community Commercial Larger scale, primarily retail, restaurant and accommodation uses that serve the broader community. Buildings should be located close to the street with parking to the rear or side and should be well-connected to surrounding development and pedestrian infrastructure.	
O Office / Research Larger-scale 2-6 story buildings generally housing professional offices or research/development activities with single or multiple tenants. May involve multiple large-scale buildings in a campus setting, but buildings should be in a walkable configuration with shared parking typically behind or to the side. Supportive retail establishments may occupy the lower levels of a multistory building. Supportive retail uses include coffee shops, delicatessens, barbers, and bookstores among others.	

Development Type descriptions	Pattern and Character Examples
I Limited Industrial Typically 1-2 story large footprint buildings intended for light industrial development, clean manufacturing or warehousing activities.	
CD Cluster Development Primarily residential development on large sites (typically at least 40 acres) where relatively small lots are arranged in a clustered pattern, rather than larger lots spread over the entire site. This type of development leaves a significant area of a site undeveloped (often 50%) to preserve significant natural areas such as steep slopes, stream corridors and areas of mature trees.	
OS Greenspace Includes formal parks, recreation areas, trails, and natural open space.	

These sketches and photographs are intended to reflect the general size of buildings and their relationships to each other and to the street. The examples show that a range of architectural styles can be accommodated in any given development pattern. The illustrations should not be interpreted as a preference for a particular architectural style.

Land Management

GOAL

Efficient and attractive use of land resources that strengthens the quality, character, and upkeep of the built environment while balancing redevelopment and strategic expansion with open space preservation.

Objective 1. Strengthen Downtown.

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| <p>LM 1.1 Update the Mainstreet Morgantown Design Guidelines to address specific considerations in each of the “Character Areas” that are identified in the 2010 Downtown Strategic Plan Update.</p> <p>LM 1.2 Rezone sites within the Downtown “Character Areas” as recommended in the 2010 Downtown Strategic Plan Update.</p> <p>LM 1.3 Increase the supply and quality of public space and infrastructure capacity through property acquisition and public/private partnerships.</p> | <p>LM 1.4 Create incentives for anchor retailers to establish commercial centers in the downtown area.</p> <p>LM 1.5 Create incentives for developers to build residential units downtown that will serve a broad age and socioeconomic range.</p> <p>LM 1.6 Create incentives to encourage the reuse of vacant and conversion of underutilized upper floors for new residential uses.</p> <p>LM 1.7 Create incentives that encourage the adaptive reuse of historic buildings.</p> |
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Objective 2. Promote strategic infill and redevelopment of underutilized or functionally obsolete areas.

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| <p>LM 2.1 Identify and prioritize sites for infill and redevelopment.</p> <p>LM 2.2 Create a land bank program to acquire and assemble parcels for redevelopment.</p> <p>LM 2.3 Develop incentives to encourage the consolidation of parcels for redevelopment.</p> <p>LM 2.4 Continue capital improvements within existing tax increment financing (TIF) districts to encourage private investment.</p> | <p>LM 2.5 Adopt a policy to pursue pay-as-you-go tax increment financing (TIF) and limit the use of long-term bond debt.</p> <p>LM 2.6 Prioritize capital improvements near infill or redevelopment sites to encourage private investment.</p> <p>LM 2.7 Adopt regulations that provide for an expedited development review and approval process in designated areas if proposals meet specific criteria.</p> |
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Objective 3. Facilitate the creation of residential areas with strong neighborhood qualities.

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| <p>LM 3.1 Update development standards to require high-quality pedestrian-scale streets with sidewalks, street trees, adequate lighting, and tree lawns in newly developed residential areas.</p> <p>LM 3.2 Require major residential subdivisions to create a master plan that incorporates the principles of traditional neighborhood design.</p> | <p>LM 3.3 Permit small-scale neighborhood commercial services and mixed-use nodes in central locations within new planned unit developments (PUDs).</p> <p>LM 3.4 Require street or multi-use path connections between new residential neighborhoods and existing developed areas wherever practical.</p> |
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Objective 4. Guide new commercial/retail and office developments in a mixed-use pattern.

- LM 4.1 Create design standards that orient commercial buildings in a way that helps to define the streetscape, with shared parking to the rear or side of buildings.
- LM 4.2 Create regulations that require future commercial development to include public space (i.e. walkways, pocket parks, seating areas, bicycles storage (origin) and racks (destination), etc.)
- LM 4.3 Revise zoning regulations to permit mixed-use development at appropriate scales in various zoning districts.

Objective 5. Encourage land use patterns that support improved transportation choice and efficiency.

- LM 5.1 Incorporate “park-once” site design requirements to support mixed-use development.
- LM 5.2 Permit higher density development in areas that are well-supported by existing or planned transportation infrastructure or transit services.

Objective 6. Improve community appearance, particularly at city gateways.

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| <p>LM 6.1 Adopt additional design standards (architectural appearance, building materials, landscaping, signage) in the zoning code.</p> <p>LM 6.2 Introduce form-based elements into the zoning code that are prescriptive, stating what is desired by the community.</p> <p>LM 6.3 Create design guidelines for targeted areas.</p> | <p>LM 6.4 Expand code enforcement throughout the City.</p> <p>LM 6.5 Encourage major redevelopment projects to relocate utilities from view of primary corridors, arterials, and collectors with emphasis on underground placement.</p> <p>LM 6.6 Require all properties to have trash can enclosures, removing cans, totes, and dumpsters from view of frontage streets.</p> |
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Objective 7. Expand the areas of protected open space.

- LM 7.1 Adopt an open space dedication requirement for major subdivisions and planned unit developments (PUDs).
- LM 7.2 Identify opportunities to acquire additional park space or establish green corridors to expand and connect open space network.
- LM 7.3 Allow vacant platted lots to be used for community gardens.

Objective 8. Monitor and improve the effectiveness of the development regulations and the development process.

- LM 8.1 Interview members of the development community to identify shortfalls in the zoning code or difficulties with the development review and approval process.
- LM 8.2 Identify types of development requests that could be approved administratively rather than by the planning commission or board of zoning appeals.
- LM 8.3 Simplify the development review and approval process, particularly pertaining to minor variance requests or site plan amendments (i.e. expand administrative approvals).

Objective 9. Promote orderly and well-managed regional growth patterns.

- LM 9.1 Conduct semi-annual meetings with the County, MMMPO and neighboring municipalities on regional land use and transportation issues.
- LM 9.2 Prepare educational material on development best practices and benefits of zoning.
- LM 9.3 Develop and maintain a detailed inventory of parcel data with existing land uses for the entire County using Geographic Information Systems (GIS) technology.
- LM 9.4 Develop an annexation policy based on compatibility with the Comprehensive Plan.
- LM 9.5 Evaluate mutual benefits and legislative constraints of shared and/or consolidated services with neighboring municipalities, annexation, urban growth boundaries, and metro governance.
- LM 9.6 Evaluate MUB’s policies and obligations of sanitary sewer and water service expansion.
- LM 9.7 Establish strong incentives that promote growth within Morgantown over growth in unincorporated areas through sewer, water and stormwater services, municipal revenue formulas, and user fees. Emphasis should be on working toward equalizing revenue formulas across jurisdictional boundaries (such as fee structures).
- LM 9.8 Meet quarterly with WVU Administration and Facilities Planning Officials to evaluate off-campus impacts of University development plans, and likely changes in University policies that impact the City’s Comprehensive Plan and tax base.

Transportation

GOAL

A balanced, safe, attractive well-connected transportation system that offers reduced congestion, supports and encourages desirable growth, and integrates private vehicles, public transportation, biking, and walking.

Objective 1. Address neighborhood transportation issues in a manner that balances overall mobility with neighborhood integrity.

- TR 1.1 Develop and implement a Regional Parking Management Plan in partnership with the MMMPO.
- TR 1.2 Expand a parking management programming in targeted areas such as residential permitted parking.
- TR 1.3 Identify neighborhood parking problems that can be addressed cooperatively by the Parking Authority and/or other groups.

Objective 2. Reduce presence of freight trucks within city limits.

- TR 2.1 Develop and implement a Regional Truck Traffic Plan in partnership with the MMMPO.
- TR 2.2 Expand efforts to enforce weight limits, covered loads, and truck exhaust standards.
- TR 2.3 Evaluate the long-term viability of the Morgantown Energy Facility.
- TR 2.4 Establish agreements with local trucking companies on preferred truck routes, which could include increasing weight limit on Interstate 68 between exist 1 (US 119) and 4 (WV 7), improvements to Greenbag Road as a designated truck route, reducing permitted weight on Walnut Street Bridge, etc.

Objective 3. Expand ridership and coverage of bus, PRT and other alternative transportation modes.

- TR 3.1 Meet semi-annually with Mountain Line Transit Authority and the MMMPO to evaluate bus route coverage and frequency.
- TR 3.2 Promote citizens' awareness of existing transit services and commuter alternatives such as the carpool/vanpool programing.
- TR 3.3 Evaluate opportunities of increasing ridership of the PRT by people not affiliated with the university.
- TR 3.4 Develop an alternative transportation ridership incentive program in conjunction with major employers and WVU.

Objective 4. Work with West Virginia University to manage university-related traffic.

- TR 4.1 Partner with WVU in developing a grade-separated pedestrian crossing at Grumbeins Island.
- TR 4.2 Lobby WVU to develop a parking garage at the Coliseum with grade-separated pedestrian crossing connecting WVU athletic facilities complex with WVU Evansdale campus.
- TR 4.3 Meet semi-annually with WVU to remain informed and provide input on their transportation and parking plan.
- TR 4.4 Meet semi-annually with WVU to consider strategies for discouraging or limiting student automobile ownership and the impacts of those strategies.
- TR 4.5 Lobby WVU to develop park-and-ride facilities for students, employees and for use during special events as recommended in the Long Range Transportation Plan.
- TR 4.6 Lobby WVU to develop long-term storage parking for students off campus.

Objective 5. Increase bicycle use through infrastructure improvements and education.

- TR 5.1 Implement the Morgantown Bicycle Plan.
- TR 5.2 Develop a bicycling education plan.
- TR 5.3 Develop a traffic enforcement plan to improve bicycling safety and to reduce the perceived risk of bicycling in Morgantown.
- TR 5.4 Implement a "Complete Streets" policy used to guide development review and approval, roadway maintenance, right-of-way improvements, and right-of-way expansion wherever practical.
- TR 5.5 Develop a feeder trail system that connects neighborhoods with the Caperton and Decker's Creek Trails.

Objective 6. Encourage walking by expanding pedestrian networks and improving pedestrian safety and accessibility.

- TR 6.1 Implement the Pedestrian Safety Plan.
- TR 6.2 Develop and implement a Regional Sidewalk Connectivity Plan in partnership with the MMMPO to construct, expand and/or connect sidewalk networks.
- TR 6.3 Construct new sidewalks where none exist in areas that have are strategic opportunities to expand the connected sidewalk network and link significant destinations.
- TR 6.4 Continue to require pedestrian walkways and sidewalks in all new developments that connect to the existing pedestrian network wherever practical.
- TR 6.5 Reinststitute City Engineering and Public Works Department programming to systematically repair and/or reconstruct failing sidewalks and construct new sidewalk connections funded wholly or partly by adjoining property owners.
- TR 6.6 Install stairways at the end of bridges to provide access to pedestrian routes below bridges, with priority at strategic locations along Deckers Creek below the Walnut Street and University Avenue Street bridges.
- TR 6.7 Study the feasibility of developing and bicycle and pedestrian connection between the Evansdale and Sunnyside neighborhoods in collaboration with WVU.

The MMMPO and Long Range Transportation Plan

The Morgantown Monongalia MPO is the federally-designated transportation planning agency for Morgantown and Monongalia County. The MMMPO has the authority to plan, prioritize, and recommend transportation projects for federal and state funding. It is also responsible for ensuring the region is in compliance with federal and state planning requirements.

One of the MMMPO's core functions is to maintain a Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) and a Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for the metropolitan area that fosters mobility and access for people and goods, efficient system performance and preservation, and quality of life. The most recent LRTP was coordinated with this Comprehensive Plan Update as an outcome of the Crossroads regional vision.

Objective 7. Support changes to the roadway network to alleviate traffic congestion.

- TR 7.1 Continue sponsorship of and partnership with the MMMPO and maintain leadership roles on its policy board and advisory committees.
- TR 7.2 Develop an Access Management Plan in collaboration with the MMMPO.
- TR 7.3 Lobby the MMMPO for roadway capacity improvements as recommended in the MMMPO Long Range Transportation Plan.
- TR 7.4 Lobby the MMMPO for improvements to traffic control devices, traffic demand management strategies, and roadway and wayfinding signage as recommended in the MMMPO Long Range Transportation Plan (i.e., changing lights to signs etc.)

Objective 8. Support improvements to transportation service and access to Hart Field.

- TR 8.1 Implement the 2012 Morgantown Municipal Airport Master Plan.
- TR 8.2 Pursue the proposed runway expansion project recommended in the 2012 Morgantown Municipal Airport Master Plan.
- TR 8.3 Implement advanced runway protection strategies.
- TR 8.4 Expand public transportation and taxi services for airport passengers.

Environment

GOAL

Protected natural areas, efficient use of energy resources, healthy waterways and clean air.

Objective 1. Support efforts to improve air quality locally and regionally.

- EN 1.1 Lobby state and federal environmental agencies to strengthen air quality standards.
- EN 1.2 Lobby state and federal environmental agencies to enforce air quality standards.

Objective 2. Maintain quality ground and surface water quality.

- EN 2.1 Monitor the quality of groundwater to minimize the potential of contamination to the drinking water supply
- EN 2.2 Report possible groundwater contamination to the appropriate entities (WV Department of Environmental Protection and US EPA)
- EN 2.3 Continue to monitor surface water for possible contamination from Acid Mine Drainage sites.
- EN 2.4 Identify treatment measures for Acid Mine Drainage contamination.
- EN 2.5 Lobby for state regulation to protect water quality from current mining and extraction activities.

Objective 3. Protect environmentally significant areas and natural resources.

- EN 3.1 Update subdivision regulations and site design standards for controlling soil erosion, surface water quality and sedimentation, and to minimize the removal of natural vegetation.
- EN 3.2 Adopt stronger regulations restricting development on steep slopes based on best practices.
- EN 3.3 Verify the presence of any significant natural features in development proposals and consider the quality of the feature to determine whether it should be protected, restored, or allowed to be altered.
- EN 3.4 Identify and survey areas for flood plain/wetland protection, habitat quality, connectedness, recreational opportunities, and pollution reduction capabilities.

Objective 4. Improve the urban tree canopy and greenway network.

- EN 4.1 Develop urban forest management plan and policies that address protection or replacement significant trees on developing land.
- EN 4.2 Establish standards for tree species located within and near public right-of-way and or easements.
- EN 4.3 Examine paper streets (undeveloped right-of-way), utility-owned land and floodplains for potential acquisition and/or use as greenspace.
- EN 4.4 Establish pocket parks in every neighborhood.
- EN 4.5 Plant shade trees in city parking lots.

Objective 5. Promote energy conservation and "green" building.

- EN 5.1 Update zoning and building codes to accommodate alternative energy generation (i.e. small-scale wind or solar).
- EN 5.2 Create a Green Building Program that provides incentives for use of "green" building techniques that are energy efficient and environmentally friendly (using LEED or another best practice benchmark).
- EN 5.3 Design and construct future city buildings and facilities using LEED standards.
- EN 5.4 Incorporate LEED standards into renovations of city buildings and facilities.

Objective 6. Reduce solid waste generated in the city.

- EN 6.1 Conduct a residential composting program that involves education and the coordination of local home composting supply providers.
- EN 6.2 Evaluate the success of the Clean Community Concept recycling program.
- EN 6.3 Establish a program to encourage recycling participation by commercial uses, which includes two-family and multi-family residential developments under the City's 2012 Solid Waste Contract.
- EN 6.4 Work with the Monongalia County Solid Waste Authority to expand residential and commercial recycling programming, particularly curb-side single stream, throughout the greater Morgantown market.
- EN 6.5 Study the feasibility of developing and implementing requirements for a certain percentage of construction and demolition waste to be recycled.

Neighborhoods and Housing

GOAL

Attractive, well-maintained neighborhoods that offer a broad mix of desirable housing options and convenient access to services and amenities.

Objective 1. Preserve integrity of existing neighborhoods, particularly single-family areas while encouraging compatible infill development.

- NH 1.1 Research available programs and funding to support renovation of existing rental or single-family home-owner properties.
- NH 1.2 Pursue zoning map amendments where appropriate to address potential zoning conflicts in residential areas shown as “neighborhood conservation” on the Land Management Map.
- NH 1.3 Evaluate zoning to ensure that it promotes rehabilitation or adaptive reuse of existing buildings, and context-sensitive construction of dwelling units on infill lots.

Objective 2. Improve conditions in neighborhoods surrounding Downtown and WVU.

- NH 2.1 Adopt zoning updates proposed in the Sunnyside Up neighborhood plan.
- NH 2.2 Form a task force to involve students in property maintenance and neighborhood issues.
- NH 2.3 Conduct a semi-annual student-led neighborhood cleanup day.
- NH 2.4 Expand partnerships with WVU to invest in revitalization efforts in targeted neighborhoods.

Objective 3. Improve the safety and appearance of all neighborhoods.

- NH 3.1 Require adequate and attractive street lighting to be incorporated as part of all new multi-family residential development, major subdivisions created for residential and/or mixed-use developments, and planned unit developments.
- NH 3.2 Prioritize in the City’s Capital Improvement Plan strategic, adequate, and attractive street lighting enhancements.

Objective 4. Promote the development of a broad range of housing types and prices.

- NH 4.1 Provide incentives to developers to encourage development of alternative housing types (i.e. higher density, live-work, mixed-use) in designated growth areas.
- NH 4.2 Provide incentives to developers to make development more desirable to build moderately-priced housing.
- NH 4.3 Require residential development projects of a certain scale to include housing options with a range of price-points.
- NH 4.4 Develop a plan to address increases demand for affordable student housing resulting from higher price-points of newly constructed developments in collaboration with WVU.

Objective 5. Support housing assistance programs and ensure compliance with Fair Housing policies.

- NH 5.1 Contribute to an internet-based regional registry of rental property owners or management companies where tenants can rate their experiences and share those experiences with others.
- NH 5.2 Conduct a campaign to educate property managers about the Fair Housing Act and housing discrimination.
- NH 5.3 Enhance plans review, approval, and permitting processes to ensure compliance with the Fair Housing Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).
- NH 5.4 Provide public education of various Federal, State, County and local financial assistance programs for first time home-buyers.
- NH 5.5 Provide homebuyer and seller education seminars and publications.
- NH 5.6 Provide incentives to encourage the development of affordable senior housing and assisted living developments within mixed-use and multi-family zoning districts.

Community Facilities and Services

GOAL

Highly desirable and competitive community facilities and services that promote the health and wellbeing of all of Morgantown’s residents.

Objective 1. Maintain high quality utility services to meet the growing needs of the community.

- CF 1.1 Review water and sewer fees to ensure that such fees remain competitive with neighboring jurisdictions while supporting the cost of water and sewer infrastructure.
- CF 1.2 Evaluate stormwater fees to ensure that such fees remain competitive with neighboring jurisdictions while supporting the cost of stormwater management infrastructure.
- CF 1.3 Evaluate sewer and water service capacity to determine if existing infrastructure is adequate to support increased development densities where recommended by the Comprehensive Plan.

Objective 2. Maintain and expand the parks and recreational facilities and programming.

- CF 2.1 Implement and update the BOPARC Master Plan.
- CF 2.2 Evaluate how well the city’s parks and recreational facilities serve the needs of citizens, looking specifically at the quality of each park or facility and their accessibility to surrounding neighborhoods.
- CF 2.3 Explore the feasibility of developing a community recreational center that offers facilities and programming like fitness rooms; gymnasiums; swimming pools; sauna, whirlpool, steam rooms; tennis courts, racquetball/handball courts; weight training room; banquet/meeting rooms and kitchen; craft rooms; preschool/child care rooms; computer labs; teen center/game room; etc.
- CF 2.4 Explore joint recreational programming with other community entities including West Virginia University and Monongalia County Schools.
- CF 2.5 Study alternatives for funding parks and recreational facilities and programming that includes, among others, cost-benefit analysis of existing programming, user-fee schedules, program and rental pricing, enterprise funds, revenue generating facilities, fund raising, sponsorships, public-private partnerships, financing capital projects, etc.

Objective 3. Support quality educational programs and facilities.

- CF 3.1 Hold annual meetings between the City, Monongalia County Schools and West Virginia University to create new educational opportunities for students and the general community.
- CF 3.2 Assist Monongalia County Schools with identifying appropriate sites for new schools that serve Morgantown’s neighborhoods.
- CF 3.3 Encourage Monongalia County Schools to continue to make their facilities available for use by the community outside of school hours for appropriate purposes, while not interfering with the school’s provision of quality learning programs.
- CF 3.4 Lobby Monongalia County Schools to seek adaptive reuses for vacated buildings and properties through public-private partnerships.

Objective 4. Provide appropriate social services and facilities to meet the changing needs of the community in concert with the City’s Five-Year Consolidated Plan, Annual Action Plans, and Annual Performance Reports.

- CF 4.1 Create an initiative or partnership to coordinate social services, policies, programs, and projects related to affordable housing, access to transportation, medical and mental care, literacy, job and life skills training, affordable childcare and after-school programming, and other needs.
- CF 4.2 Conduct an annual social services roundtable where the city meets local social service providers to identify community needs and develop strategies to address those needs.
- CF 4.3 Identify programs to assist special needs populations, particularly individuals and families suffering from substance abuse or severe and persistent mental illness, experiencing homelessness or are at-risk of becoming homeless, while removing barriers to independent living and promoting self-sufficiency.
- CF 4.4 Conduct a campaign to raise awareness of social services.
- CF 4.5 Develop a program, in partnership with public transit providers, to increase access to and utilization of public transportation by low-income individuals and families and employees working shift-related schedules
- CF 4.6 Prioritize in the City’s Capital Improvement Plan the removal of barriers at all public facilities, including parks and recreation sites, that limits access and utilization by persons with physical, sight, and/or hearing impairments.

Objective 5. Continue to improve city services and community engagement.

- CF 5.1 Evaluate waste collection services, schedules, and pricing to identify potential improvements or new services.
- CF 5.2 Provide quarterly hazardous waste collection events. (Electronics, tires, appliances, hazardous liquids)
- CF 5.3 Develop a regional strategy for sharing and/or consolidating safety services.
- CF 5.4 Expand community policing activities for residents.
- CF 5.5 Establish a community ambassador program.

Objective 6. Encourage healthy lifestyles.

- CF 6.1 Form a Safe Routes to School committee with Monongalia County Schools and the MMMPO to obtain funding and assistance in encouraging students to walk or bike on safe and accessible routes to school.
- CF 6.2 Designate a city-wide “Car-free” day where citizens are encouraged to walk, bike or use transit to get to their place of business.
- CF 6.3 Create a Healthy Morgantown Initiative where the city partners with local institutions to promote awareness of healthy lifestyles and existing health services, develop wellness initiatives, and pursue grant funding.

Economic Development

GOAL

A regional approach to economic development and infrastructure investment that keeps Morgantown competitive and attractive to existing and new businesses, while strengthening the city's fiscal health.

Objective 1. Promote investment in infrastructure.

- ED1.1 Implement innovative strategies to diversify revenue and financing mechanisms that fairly, equitably, and expeditiously fund infrastructure improvements and expansions (examples include user-fees, business improvement districts, tax increment financing (TIF), public-private partnerships (P3s), impact fees, assessments, state and federal grants, etc.)
- ED1.2 Lobby the state for a larger share of road improvement funds by demonstrating local revenue commitments to augment state investments.

Objective 2. Retain and grow existing businesses.

- ED2.1 Maintain a leadership role on MAP/MCDA policy boards by prioritizing efforts to identify and understand issues facing local businesses and seek active opportunities to promote business growth, expansion, and diversification.
- ED2.2 Prioritize transportation improvements in coordination with the MMMPO to reduce congestion and increase mobility options near major employers and growth areas.
- ED2.3 Provide real estate incentives (e.g., tax abatements) tied to net employment creation and/or tax revenue impacts for existing companies that wish to expand locally.
- ED2.4 Continue to develop buildings at MAP business parks that are offered at reasonable market rates for sale as well as leasing to local businesses.
- ED2.5 Develop promotional material on the region's amenity package to help local companies recruit employees (particularly those with higher-degrees). The amenity package includes arts, culture, and recreation facilities; dining and entertainment; competitive cost of living; quality of life, etc.

Objective 3. Capitalize on Morgantown's competitive advantages and attract new businesses to diversify the City's economic base.

- ED3.1 Develop a collaborative regional branding and marketing initiative.
- ED3.2 Identify incentives that the city could offer to attract businesses in targeted industries (see examples within the draft plan).

Objective 4. Stimulate and support small business and entrepreneurial activity.

- ED4.1 Expand the Morgantown Enterprise Center (MEC) to provide additional office and incubation space to new small businesses that employ skilled workers and have good growth potential.
- ED4.2 Provide office and incubation space within Downtown for small businesses and start-ups.
- ED4.3 Develop a technology incubation program that provides access to laboratory space, offices, tools, and business expertise, to facilitate the commercialization of local research and innovations in fields such as bioscience, information technology, and energy.
- ED4.4 Contribute to MAP's revolving loan fund for small businesses.

Objective 5. Provide desirable locations for business expansion.

- ED5.1 Maintain a listing of available business locations and their amenities, in collaboration with MAP and the I-79 Development Council.
- ED5.2 Continue to market available business expansion sites (with emphasis on offering building space at reasonable rates).
- ED5.3 Develop a specific target marketing plan for the Morgantown Airport Technology Park in concert with Federal Laboratories and other major employers that positions the park for technology tenants that are not already accommodated in the market.
- ED5.4 Expand infrastructure development from the West Virginia National Guard Readiness Center for Airport Technology Park economic development.
- ED5.5 Support the construction of a light manufacturing business incubator building in the Morgantown Airport Technology Park.
- ED5.6 Establish a relationship with a local real estate professional to track real estate trends in the various office, retail and industrial markets.

Objective 6. Strive for a balanced approach to economic development that considers the fiscal impacts of growth.

- ED6.1 Study the feasibility and regulatory constraints of diversifying municipal and county tax revenue formulas and tax incentives across the greater Morgantown market that promote fair, equitable, balanced, progressive, and competitive taxing policies.
- ED6.2 Consider the fiscal impact on city and county governments of any proposed major development or annexation.
- ED6.3 Use incentives and zoning to promote development in areas with existing infrastructure capacity, in order to reduce the need for infrastructure extensions, and to concentrate infrastructure improvements reducing short-term and long-term operating costs.

Objective 7. Support workforce development and training initiatives.

- ED7.1 Hold annual meetings between MAP, property and business owners groups, WVU, Monongalia County Schools, and large employers to collaboratively ensure that existing workforce development and training initiatives are meeting the needs of employers in the region

Implementation

How to Use the Plan

The Plan is intended to be used on a daily basis as public and private decisions are made concerning development, redevelopment, capital improvements, economic incentives and other matters affecting the City. The following is a summary of how decisions and processes should align with the goals and strategies of the Plan.

Annual Work Programs and Budgets. Individual departments, administrators, boards and commissions should be cognizant of the recommendations of the Plan when preparing annual work programs and budgets.

Development Approvals. Administrative and legislative approvals of development proposals, including rezoning and subdivision plats, should be a central means of implementing the Comprehensive Plan. Decisions by the Planning Commission and Town Council should reference relevant Comprehensive Plan recommendations and policies. The zoning code and subdivision regulations should be updated in response to regulatory strategies presented in the Plan.

Capital Improvement Plan. An annual, five-year and ten-year capital improvement plan (CIP) should be prepared consistent with the Comprehensive Plan's land use policies and infrastructure recommendations. New improvements that are not reflected in the Plan, which could dramatically impact the Plan's land use recommendations, should necessitate a minor update to the Plan.

Economic Incentives. Economic Incentives should be reviewed to ensure consistency with the recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan.

Private Development Decisions. Property owners and developers should consider the goals and strategies of the Comprehensive Plan in their land planning and investment decisions. Public decision-makers will be using the Plan as a guide in their development deliberations such as zoning matters and infrastructure requests. Property owners and developers should be cognizant of and compliment the Plan's recommendations.

Consistent Interpretation. City Council should collaborate with the Planning Commission to ensure clear and consistent interpretation of major items in the Plan.

Objective 1. Involve a wide variety of stakeholders in implementation.

- I.1.1 Provide final copies of the Comprehensive Plan on the City web site and at libraries.
- I.1.2 Identify and engage non-government partners to assist with implementation.
- I.1.3 Establish a program to provide ongoing public education on the Comprehensive Plan Update through printed and electronic media, or face-to-face engagement.
- I.1.4 Provide ongoing educational opportunities on innovative planning and development tools and best practices for the Planning Commission and City Departments.
- I.1.5 Study the feasibility and regulatory constraints of forming a local council of governments to enhance coordination among municipalities, county government, and institutions.
- I.1.6 Form a task force to draft legislation and lobby the State legislature to enact legislation that supports those Comprehensive Plan objectives and strategies that require local empowerment to fully realize.

Objective 2. Monitor and share implementation progress.

- I.2.1 Prepare an annual report that summarizes the status of Plan implementation and outlines annual accomplishments and priorities.
- I.2.2 Hold a special public meeting on a regular basis to review the City's success in implementing the Plan.
- I.2.3 Schedule meetings with the Planning Commission on a bi-annual basis to address the status of plan implementation and discuss other long-range planning issues.
- I.2.4 Develop a formal training program for commission and board members. Training should focus on land use law, meeting procedures, organizational dynamics and how to use the Plan.

Objective 3. Provide resources for implementing the Plan.

- I.3.1 Regularly update the City's Capital Improvement Plans (CIPs).
- I.3.2 Prepare annual departmental work programs and budgets with awareness of the Comprehensive Plan.
- I.3.3 Identify and secure funds for prioritized initiatives (This could include grants, tax measures, bonds, private investments, public-private partnerships, etc.).

Objective 4. Require concurrence with the Comprehensive Plan.

- I.4.1 Require concurrence in rezoning and other major development approvals.
- I.4.2 Require staff reports to reference the Comprehensive Plan.

Objective 5. Update the Plan at least every ten years.

- I.5.1 Create a citizen committee to design the planning process.
- I.5.2 Prepare an updated Comprehensive Plan.

Community Relations

From the design of the planning process, to the Regional Vision, to the specific strategies in each Plan element, collaboration is a major theme throughout this Comprehensive Plan. The Plan's success depends upon continuing to nurture and improve relationships between local governments, citizens, businesses and institutions within Greater Morgantown. To address this topic, the 1998 Comprehensive Plan contained a chapter titled, "Community Relations." This Plan Update recognizes that these themes run through the entire plan and therefore emphasizes them here as a component of implementation.

This Plan includes a number of issues and strategies that pertain to the related themes of:

- Participation and engagement from citizens;
- Leadership among citizens, the private-sector, institutions and government;
- Collaboration between private-sector, institutions and government organizations; and
- Progress in State legislative issues.

Vision for Collaborating...
Collaboration was a recurring theme in the public input for Crossroads. The Regional Vision captures this sentiment through the following statement:

An engaged community with leaders that embrace continued citizen participation and strong collaboration and cooperation among municipalities, the county, the State, WVU and major employers.

Key Findings

Limited resources. There are limited financial resources at all levels of government to support the needs of the Greater Morgantown's diverse population. In recent years, the area has missed out on State funding opportunities because of local disagreements over priorities. There is currently no platform for sharing or discussing issues shared among area's local governments and encouraging consensus. The region could benefit from economies-of-scale by cooperating on municipal service delivery, capital improvement planning and finance, land use planning and regulation, taxing policy, governance, and other topics.

Town-gown relationship. As a college town, Morgantown (and the surrounding area) benefits immeasurably from West Virginia University. Likewise, the University benefits from a setting that is attractive to students, faculty, staff, their families, alumni and prospective philanthropists. However, like many town-gown relationships, there are ongoing challenges. Traffic impacts, conflicts between students and residents, and uncertainty over the University's growing land holdings and its fiscal impact are some of those challenges. Many of this Plan's strategies involve cooperation with WVU with the aim of promoting a mutually-beneficial relationship.

Weak planning culture in Monongalia County. The lack of county-wide zoning, development review and permitting requirements has allowed growth in the County to occur in haphazard patterns without adequate transportation improvements and has contributed to uncertainty in the real estate market. Urban growth impacts everyone in the region, yet some do not pay their fair share for the benefits of that growth. There is a need to educate local governments in the county that planning is essential for good stewardship of resources and is thereby an important part of good government.

Challenges in State enabling legislation. In West Virginia, municipalities only have those powers that are specifically granted by the legislature. While there have been recent improvements to State enabling in recent years, the planning toolkit that cities have is relatively limited compared to other states. For instance, lack of extraterritorial authority makes it difficult to control development outside of the city that negatively impacts the Morgantown Airport. Also the city is limited in its ability to raise revenue through special tax assessments or impact fees. Further, there are no precedents for joint local government cooperation.