

Jefferson County Planning Commission

Work Session



AUGUST 29,
2023

Agenda Items

Item #1: Livability Profile

Item #2: Comprehensive Plan Composition

ITEM #1: LIVABILITY PROFILE

- Staff Presentation of Community Data

STUDY REVEALS IMPORTANCE OF GROUNDWATER FOR STABILITY OF FRESHWATER FISH POPULATIONS AND RESILIENCE TO CLIMATE CHANGE

Issue: Climate change is warming streams and rivers of the Chesapeake Bay watershed, and this is a critical concern for fisheries management and conservation. To address this issue, the Chesapeake Bay Program (CBP) recently identified four actions:

- address the threats of climate change in all aspects of the partnership's work;
- prioritize communities, working lands, and most vulnerable habitats;
- apply the best scientific, modeling, monitoring, and planning capabilities; and
- connect restoration outcomes with emerging opportunities.

■ Major Findings

- Groundwater in karst terrain promotes resiliency to climate change in streams.
- Extensive aquifers associated with karst terrain (e.g., limestone) were less sensitive to air temperature fluctuations than streams elsewhere, indicating the importance of karstic groundwater inputs for climate change refugia in streams.
- The presence of calcium precipitates (marl) in stream substrates was associated with thermal resiliency and ecological stability over time, indicating that such features may be a useful indicator of climate change refugia in stream ecosystems.

- Fish populations were most stable over time in streams underlain by karst.
- Sites in karst terrain were characterized by species persistence whereas streams elsewhere were characterized by species colonization and extirpation.
- Species such as checkered sculpin were only observed in karst terrain and were stable over time, consistent with prior research demonstrating their reliance on stable environmental conditions ([Hitt et al. 2022](#)).
- Some species colonized several sites (e.g., green sunfish) indicating their broad tolerance to environmental conditions across the watershed.
- Smallmouth bass, an important species for fisheries management, were absent in several sites where they had been observed previously. Prior research showed declining populations of smallmouth bass in the Potomac River ([Hitt and others 2020](#)), and the new study suggests smallmouth bass may be declining in headwater streams as well.

ITEM #2: COMPREHENSIVE PLAN COMPOSITION

- Drafting of Comprehensive Plan Goals

THEMES

- Quality Land Use and Growth Management
- Balancing Tourism and Conservation
- Community Connections
- Growing a Diverse Economy
- Creating Livability

QUALITY LAND USE AND GROWTH MANAGEMENT

- Quality Land Use and Growth Management is focused on development in the County and the Goals are focused on what actions Planning and County Commission can directly take.
- Objectives can include Future Land Use map changes and policies regarding development rights.



QUALITY LAND USE AND GROWTH MANAGEMENT

- 1: Ensure future land use regulations and policies support the existing development rights of residential and non-residential properties.
- 2: Concentrate high density development in the County's Preferred Growth Areas (PGA), Villages, and municipal Growth Boundaries (UGB&GMB) where infrastructure exists or is made available.
- 3: Encourage policy changes to support agricultural activities and promote agritourism.

BALANCING TOURISM AND CONSERVATION

- Balancing Tourism and Conservation acknowledges three of the major drivers of tourism as an important part of Jefferson County.
- With a historic National Park, part of the Appalachian Trail, additional historic sites, small towns, and rural character, the Objectives in this theme will be about hat preserving Jefferson County's identity while maintaining access to what makes the County unique.



BALANCING TOURISM AND CONSERVATION

- 4: Support the preservation of historical sites and leverage heritage tourism to foster local business growth and development.
- 5: Preserve the rural character of Jefferson County by supporting land conservation programs.
- 6: Balance the preservation of Jefferson County's natural resources with providing access to and utilization of outdoor recreational tourism.

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

- Community connections includes the Goals that Jefferson County does not have direct jurisdiction over and needs to work with state, regional, and local partners to achieve.
- These Goals are generally aspirational and Objectives will be more limited but are important to include in a Comprehensive Plan so other organizations understand what Jefferson County would like to see.



COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

- 7: Collaborate with state and regional transportation partners to enhance the built environment to promote safety on and around state and municipal roads and lessen congestion.
- 8: Foster a culture of public engagement that effectively communicates policy making decisions.
- 9: Work with partners to protect the watersheds of Jefferson County and preserve the natural environment.

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS CONT.

10: Coordinate with the Jefferson County School Board to identify appropriate locations to develop new schools based on existing and proposed residential development and infrastructure while supporting the enhancement of existing school buildings.

11: Align long range planning with federal, state, county, and municipal recreation providers to ensure that a wide variety of park and recreation opportunities are available throughout Jefferson County.

GROWING A DIVERSE ECONOMY

- While the fiscal policy tools Jefferson County can directly use are limited, the Goals in this theme will highlight what type of employment and businesses the County wants and where they should be developed.
- Objectives will focus on what actions or policies the County can implement.

When the Goals mention “Infrastructure,” this includes, water, sewer, natural gas, electric, broadband, and transportation.



GROWING A DIVERSE ECONOMY

- 12: Foster job development in Jefferson County by promoting diverse businesses; employment opportunities; local business entrepreneurship; and professional service jobs.
- 13: Develop an environment that promotes existing and new businesses by expanding necessary infrastructure within the Preferred Growth Areas, Villages, and Municipal Growth Boundaries.

CREATING LIVABILITY

- Creating Livability is focused on the residents of Jefferson County and meeting their needs.
- Objectives will directly call out medical, housing, public safety, and other services and amenities that have been discussed.

When the Goals mention “Infrastructure,” this includes, water, sewer, natural gas, electric, broadband, and transportation.



CREATING LIVABILITY

14: Promote an equitable expansion of activities, amenities, and entertainment for all Jefferson County residents.

15: Enhance infrastructure and public services to meet the needs of Jefferson County Residents.

16: Improve interconnectivity by enhancing existing pedestrian and bike paths and recommending installation of pedestrian and bike paths with future development efforts.

17: Encourage a diversity of housing options including workforce and senior housing availability and accessibility to current and incoming residents.

What we need from the Planning Commission tonight...

- Do Planning Commissioners have any notes on the Existing Land Use map?
- Does Planning Commission want to have a signup sheet at the Agricultural Input Meeting or utilize a map for attendees to say where they are from?

How would Planning Commission like to start drafting Objectives before and after presentation the upcoming Input Meetings?

Updates

- Staff is looking over input from the Summer Festivities
- September will be focused on drafting Objectives.
- Staff is organizing youth community input

September 12, 2023

Next Work Session Meeting

Agricultural Input Meeting

September 13, 2023

2nd Public Input Meeting

September 18, 2023