



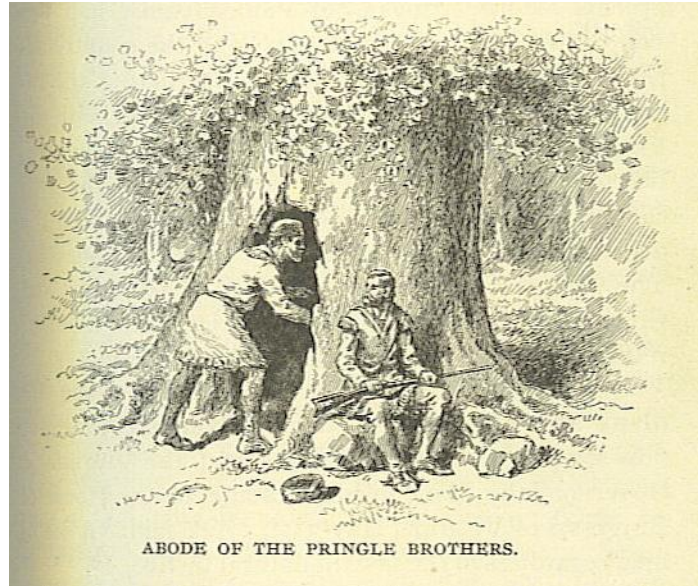
Buckhannon 2015 FINAL REPORT



May 21, 2009



Forward



Source: History and Government of West Virginia, Virgil A. Lewis, 1912

In 1764, John and Samuel Pringle, English deserters from Fort Pitt, settled in a huge hollow of a sycamore tree at Turkey Run, just north of what is now Buckhannon. They lived there for four years before John set out for the eastern part of the state in 1768. At a South Branch settlement, John learned that the French and Indian War was over and he subsequently formed a company of young men who followed him back to the Buckhannon River territory, which eventually led to the first permanent settlement west of the Allegheny Mountains between Pittsburgh and the Gulf of Mexico. (Source: City of Buckhannon Map and Informative Guide, 2000).



Over the centuries, Buckhannon has remained a rural community shaped by the events of the times. In the early 1800s, the town was major stop on the Staunton-Parkersburg Turnpike. The railroads arrived in 1883, propelling the lumber industry, significantly improving transportation within the county and with other locales and supporting the coal boom of the 1920s. The OPEC crisis created another boom for the local area in the 1970s as coal, gas and oil were in high demand. Today, those industries thrive again.

Buckhannon has dealt with the impact of wars as its eligible men and women were mobilized, of devastating floods, of flourishing industries that have disappeared, and the impact of the shopping mall. Up until the 1990s, Main Street was bustling as citizens shopped, visited with friends and enjoyed the small town life of a rural community. By the 1990s and into the early 2000s, the face of Buckhannon changed significantly: Fast food restaurants came to town, mega shopping stores opened shop that led to the closing of the remaining hometown shops, and a major four-lane highway bypassed the town.

However, not all is lost, West Virginia Wesleyan College, established in 1890, has flourished with the most beautiful college campus in the state, and is a large part of community life, economically and socially. Much of the town and Main Street's beautiful architecture is still in place and adequately maintained; the vistas of Buckhannon remain beautiful; the Buckhannon River for the most part is still pristine; the area still has its charming rural character; and the local economy is strong compared to other counties. Local citizens love the charm of Buckhannon and the local area.

But action to maintain its beauty and to reclaim what has been harmed is needed immediately. Abandoned buildings, neglected properties, some unkempt areas, empty downtown shops, poorly maintained roads and sidewalks, and potentially unregulated development threaten to detract from the area's beauty. And a significant new threat looms on Buckhannon's horizon. That threat is a completed Corridor H, which will create a major east-west Interstate-type highway along Buckhannon's northern border. The threat is manifested in terms of projected significant growth and change to the community that if not properly planned for could impair the face of Buckhannon forever.

Serendipity fortunately provides an opportunity for the city to be proactive in preparing for the expected impact that Corridor H's completion will bring. Because of a state mandate, Buckhannon is required to develop a long range comprehensive plan since the city has approved zoning ordinances and regulations in place. City Council charged the Planning Commission to develop a plan to meet the state mandate, which must be submitted by 2014. Council also had the foresight to charge the Planning Commission to work with city's residents to create a document that:

- Describes citizens' aspirations for community development and the community's future character, identity and quality of life, and
- Guides public and private actions to achieve the results set forth in the plan.

The members of the Planning Commission are humbled by this task and honored to be given the opportunity to work with local residents to enhance the development of the town. We call the plan "Buckhannon 2015" to represent what local residents want the community to look like in 2015. In essence, they want the Buckhannon/Upshur community to be a:

A great place to live, work and play!

Richard Clemens, Mark Hays, Debbie Huber, James
Huber, Cj Rylands, John Scott, Al Tucker

Town, County, and State Officials

Elected Officials of Buckhannon

Kenneth Davidson, Mayor
Pamela Cuppari, Council
Jerry Henderson, Council
Elizabeth Lee, Council
Nancy Shobe, City Recorder
Skeeter Queen, Council
David Thomas, Council

City Staff

Jerry Arnold, Street Commissioner
Richard Clemens, Zoning Officer
Matt Gregory, Chief of Police
Amberle Jenkins, Assistant City Recorder/Office Manager
Randall Levine, Municipal Judge
Sam Ludlow, City Engineer
David McCauley, Attorney
Nancy Shobe, City Recorder/Treasurer
Burl Smith, City Engineer
Mitch Tacy, Fire Chief

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Upshur County Officials

Creed Pletcher, Commissioner
Eugene Suder, Commissioner
Donnie Tenney, Commissioner, President
Willie Parker, County Administrator
Stephen E. Foster, Development Authority, Executive Director

State of West Virginia

The Honorable Joe Manchin III
The Honorable William R. Laird, 11th Senatorial District
The Honorable Randy White, 11th Senatorial District
The Honorable Bill Hamilton, 39th Representative, District

Acknowledgements

The Planning Commission members greatly appreciate the encouragement, support and involvement of the great people of the Buckhannon/Upshur community over the past eighteen months. The Buckhannon 2015 Plan would have not been nearly as comprehensive without the community's active participation. The plan includes many quotes aimed at inspiring community leaders and citizens to action, and we open here with a quote that best describes Buckhannon/Upshur and is one of the main reasons this plan is so detailed, as its people care so much for their community:

Neighbors caring for neighbors!

Carol Duffield, The Parish House

We begin by first thanking the City Council for launching the Buckhannon 2015 initiative. Council's leadership to put this endeavor in motion gave the Planning Commission the credibility to undertake this community-wide effort. Council also actively participated in many of the planning activities, communicating its desire to make Buckhannon "a great place to live, work and enjoy."

Pamela Cuppari, Kenny Davidson (current Mayor), Jerry Henderson, Jim Knorr (former Mayor), Elizabeth Lee, Skeeter Queen, Nancy Shobe, and Dave Thomas

We are extremely indebted to those concerned citizens, who actively participated in the Citizens' Advisory Committee process. Their involvement and excellent feedback played a vital role in this important community effort.

Tony Atkins, Dr. Pamela Balch, Andrew Baldesar, Dr. Mildred Beer, Diane Black, Vicky Black, Bob Braine, Debra Brockleman, Russ Bush, Mary Cameron, Dr. Marvin Carr, Kenny Davidson, Richard Edwards, Howard Feola, Jennifer Fluke, Steve Foster, Mike George, Matt Gregory, James Huber, Kathleen Loughney, Sergeant Doug Loudin, David McCauley, Ann Ours, Willie Parker, Casey Patterson, Lisa Pratt, Barry Pritts, Dick Ralston, Stan Rexroad, Dr. Damon Rhodes, Nancy Shobe, Robert Skinner III, Lowell Smith, Noel Tenney, Joyce Harris Thacker, A. G. Trussler, Rosemary Wagner, Jeff Webb, Bud Wellings, Dr. Brenda Wells, Gene Wells, and Danny Williams

We are thankful to the business, education, government, and professional leaders who volunteered to meet one-on-one with the Planning Commission. Your inputs were equally extremely valuable.

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various CAC sessions and one-on-one meetings, but Wesleyan hosted one of the CAC sessions on campus, put the community survey online and encouraged their staff and faculty to complete the survey, and administered the WVWC student survey.

Special thanks go to The Record Delta and The Inter-Mountain which provided strong support by publishing numerous articles over the past eighteen months to keep the community informed on the progress of Buckhannon 2015 planning.

We are also extremely grateful to the following organizations and businesses for allowing the Planning Commission to put the blank community surveys and collection boxes on their premises. This support was very helpful in allowing us to obtain an excellent return rate from the community as well as an excellent cross sample of the community's citizens.

Alderman's Barber Shop, Buckhannon City Hall, Chase Bank, CJ Maggie's Restaurant, Gibson Library, Gregory's Barber Shop, First Community Bank, Stockert Youth Center, Upshur County Court House, Upshur County Historical Society, and Upshur County Senior Citizens' Center

The Upshur County Development Authority played a very large role in the plan's development. Executive Director Steve Foster not only participated in most working group meetings and the CAC sessions, he allowed us to use his facilities for meetings, facilitated (set up) all the benchmarking visits (see next paragraph), and provided the Planning Commission with innumerable valuable reports and information, as well as contacts in other areas.

The Planning Commission conducted benchmarking visits to three eastern West Virginia communities, Moorefield, Shepherdstown, and Martinsburg. We are appreciative of the time and feedback their local officials gave us about their planning efforts.

Martinsburg: Steve Christian (Berkeley County Development Authority), Carol Crabtree (Region 9 POC)

Moorefield: Mallie Combs (Hardy County(HC) Development Authority), Dave Heishman (HC Planning Commission President), Phyllis Sherman (Recorder), Gary Stalnaker (Mayor), and Tom Widder (HC Planner)

Shepherdstown: Harvey Heyser (Planning Commission), Georgia Lee (Town Archivist), and Howard Mills (City Council)

We are also indebted to a number of community organizations for their strong support:

- *Buckhannon/Upshur Parish Council for holding a special information gathering session early in the process*
- *Buckhannon Rotary Club for its support.*
- *City of Buckhannon's staff: Teresa Summers for her extensive administrative support and excellent support provided by Susan Ford, Amberle Jenkins, and Nancy Shobe.*

- *Chamber of Commerce, which electronically sent the community survey to its members encouraging their participation.*
- *Upshur County School System for electronically sending the community survey to its staff and faculty encouraging their participation and for administering the High School Student Survey*

Special appreciation is given to Marvin Carr as much of the historical information in the Forward was taken from Upshur County in the Twentieth Century – Observations by Marvin Carr, WVWC

Special thanks to Bob Post, who shared his documented records about the Togetherness Group. This group, which was led by the chamber of commerce, developed and executed a Buckhannon improvement plan back from the mid 1980's to the mid-1990's.

Finally, we extend our special thanks to Dan Kohlhaas of Ashburn, Virginia for his creative graphic support on CAC slides and for the plan's cover, and for his formatting expertise.

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I. BUCKHANNON 2015

A. Why Buckhannon 2015

Nothing happens, unless first a dream.

Carl Sandburg

Buckhannon 2015 initially was conceived as a plan to meet a state-mandated requirement to have a city long-range comprehensive plan developed by 2014. The Planning Commission realized early in its planning process that the planned completion of Corridor H (Route 33) would have a significant impact upon the character of the Buckhannon/Upshur community.

Corridor H traffic is projected to increase from 13,000 to 40,000 daily when the project is complete in the 2012-2014 timeframe. Due to funding constraints, the project is expected to slip considerably. However, the need to be prepared remains. The Planning Commission learned that some eastern counties did not plan for the increased traffic growth and the subsequent community impacts brought about by increased accessibility, and they suffered significant negative effects on their communities.

Realizing the potential impacts to the Buckhannon/Upshur community, the Planning Commission with support from City Council committed itself to developing a plan that will anticipate potential impacts and allow the community to better manage development and growth without sacrificing the aspects of our community that we value so much.

Consequently, Buckhannon 2015 will not only lead to meeting a state requirement but more importantly it provides the road map to promote growth and change while retaining Buckhannon/Upshur's rich culture, traditions, and uniqueness.

B. What We Value

Dreams are the touchstones of our character.

Henry David Thoreau

Through many forums with citizens of the Buckhannon/Upshur community and through community surveys, it became evident that we (the citizens) cherish the small-town character and charm of the entire Buckhannon/Upshur community and its friendly atmosphere, and want to retain that charm and friendliness for decades to come.

We appreciate the feeling of safety brought about by the area's low crime rate. It provides a wonderful community to raise a family and for retirees to live.

We admire the area's "good" people who are helpful, considerate, and enthused with a strong sense of community spirit built upon strong faith-based underpinnings. This fact was best expressed by Carol Duffield of the Parish House: "neighbors caring for neighbors!" The community's friendly and caring people make our community a special place to live.

We are grateful for the area's natural beauty and peaceful surroundings, and the easy access to the outdoor recreation. We recognize we are privileged to live in such a clean,

scenic location, and we are committed to being good stewards by preserving the naturalness of our environment.

We treasure our vibrant Main Street and downtown area that has retained its historical streetscape and is beautifully adorned with well-designed flower displays. We will be steadfast in preserving the historic and scenic character of our downtown.

We value West Virginia Wesleyan College (WVWC) and its significant contributions to the city. We are dedicated to being outstanding partners with the college and welcoming hosts to its students.

We treasure our youth and are devoted to providing them quality schools, a safe environment and a nurturing place to grow up, and employment opportunities for their future.

We enjoy the River Walk and the area's festivals. We are committed to enhancing these unique aspects of our community.

C. What We Want To Be (Future Description)

Destiny is not a matter of choice, it is not a thing to be wanted for, it is a thing to be achieved.

William Jennings Bryant

This is the future description of Buckhannon 2015 as defined by the citizens during the Buckhannon 2015 planning process:

"Buckhannon/Upshur residents and WVWC students cherish the community's small town charm and friendly atmosphere, and want to retain that charm and friendliness for decades to come. Specifically, they:

- Feel safe and secure due to the area's low crime rate;
- Appreciate the area's "good" people who are helpful, considerate, and enthused with a strong sense of community spirit built upon strong faith-based underpinnings;
- Value the area's natural beauty and peaceful surroundings, and the easy access to the outdoor recreation opportunities it brings;
- Are grateful to still have a vibrant Main Street and downtown area that has retained its historical streetscape and is beautified by well designed flower displays;
- Feel fortunate to have WVWC located in its town and for what it brings to the city;
- Are very satisfied with basic community services: ambulance, cemetery, fire department, library, parks, sewer, trash and recycling, and water; and
- Enjoy the River Walk, and the area's festivals and events.

As much as they like the Buckhannon/Upshur community, residents and students strongly feel the community can be improved. They identified several community weaknesses that they feel must be resolved and for Buckhannon 2015 to become a reality, these weaknesses must be overcome:

- Recognizing that it will be a significant challenge, residents want increased diversity in retail shopping beginning with a clothing/shoe store along lines of a Peebles.
- Lack of activities (nothing to do) for kids, adults and families. They decry that the community offers so little for children and teenagers, which they believe is a reason for the high rate of drug and alcohol abuse. Residents desire more recreation opportunities as well as adult education and arts/humanities programs.
- Residents and WVWC students desire more dining variety, especially of the sit-down variety.
- City/county inhabitants want more employment opportunities, jobs with good salaries and benefits, not only oil and gas jobs but white-collar/professional opportunities.
- The local populace sees a city (i.e., city council) divided and they see a lack of willingness of cooperation between city and county government. They see this situation of putting Buckhannon 2015 in jeopardy and want “open, collaborative government.”
- Residents want to see improved street and sidewalk maintenance.
- They are concerned about the local school system’s effectiveness especially at the middle and high school level. They want this significant community deficiency resolved.
- They would like to see traffic along Route 20 be addressed, long before Corridor H is finished, e.g., establishing a truck route around the city as most other progressive cities have done.
- While they love the downtown area, they are frustrated with its limited parking.
- Residents and students would like to have public transportation available.
- While they appreciate the area’s low crime rate, they are concerned about police behavior and the perceived profiling of WVWC students and younger community residents. They desire to see this policing flaw replaced by a more cooperative, respectful approach to community policing.
- They would like to see increased housing variety and availability including assisted living facilities and gated patio-home complexes.

II. INTRODUCTION

A. Purpose of a Comprehensive Plan

“The purpose of planning is to help decision makers arrive at informed and thoughtful decision making...Ultimately, planning helps people to take responsibility for their community and mold it into the kind of place they want it to be.”

Preface, The Small Town Planning Handbook, 2nd ed., page xvi

1. What is a Comprehensive Plan: A Comprehensive Plan is simply a tool for guiding the growth, development, redevelopment, preservation and improvement of a community or larger area. It is intended to serve the best interests of the community, and it should be representative of the aspirations of the community’s residents. A comprehensive plan should:

- Be comprehensive in terms of covering the many diverse aspects of the community.
- Consist of a series of sections, each relating a specific aspect of the community.
- Consist of a compilation of goals and objectives for each particular section. The goals and objectives must be responsive to the needs and desires of its people.
- Spur aggressive action by the local governing bodies to implement and/or pursue the plan’s goals and objectives.
- Serve as a guide to public and private actions relating to the community’s development and change. The plan must influence the direction of growth and change, and how and where public and private investments are made.
- Be part of a continuous planning process where the plan is updated periodically to ensure it remains a viable document in guiding the future development of the community.

2. Planning Prerequisites:

- **Leadership.** According to The Small Town Planning Handbook, the key ingredient for successful small town planning and plan execution is leadership:

“Planning without active local leadership is always uncertain, frequently disappointing, and generally fatal.”

Planning Handbook

- **Community Participation:**

Communities that plan – grow by choice, not by chance.

Planning Handbook

Research indicates that it is not the size of a community that determines success. It is the attitude and willingness of local people, starting with

government leaders and then the community as a whole to work openly and collaboratively with mutual respect for one another in pursuing the plan's recommendations in good faith and in a united approach. This requirement is Buckhannon/Upshur's biggest challenge!

A positive attitude may not solve all your problems, but it will make it worth the effort. Herm Albright

If local leaders and community residents can work together, Buckhannon 2015 will be realized.

▪ **Proven Planning Methodology:**

It is not the strongest of the species that survive, not the most intelligent, but the one most responsive to change. Charles Darwin

Utilization of a proven planning methodology responsive to expected growth and community change is a far better process than through an ad-hoc, and often more emotional, case-by-case basis of managing change. Fortunately, The Small Town Planning Handbook has existed since 1988, and the 1995 second edition provides a proven, well-tested planning methodology that has been used by numerous small towns, mid-size cities, counties and multi-counties nationwide. Buckhannon 2015 utilizes the referenced methodology and the Planning Commission recommends that it continues to be used as a guide for plan implementation and subsequent periodic updating.

B. Buckhannon's History and Context

Nestled along the meandering river which shares its name in the rolling foothills of the Allegheny Mountains, the City of Buckhannon traces its roots back to the closing days of the French and Indian War when two English brothers deserted the British Army at Fort Pitt (now Pittsburgh, Pa.) in 1761 and journeyed south to what is now the Monongahela River, then the Tygart Valley River and finally to the Buckhannon River.

Recognized as the first Englishmen to set foot in today's Upshur County, Samuel and John Pringle lived for three years in an 11-foot cavity of a giant Sycamore tree along the Buckhannon River. The third but smaller generation of that tree, complete with a cavity, still stands just north of Buckhannon.

A permanent settlement was established in 1770 with the construction of Bush's Fort. That fort, located in what is now called the new section of Heavner Cemetery was destroyed in 1782 by Indians as the first of a large number of New Englanders settled in the southern part of the county.

Buckhannon is recognized as the first permanent settlement between what is now Pittsburgh and the Gulf of Mexico.

In 1816, the Virginia General Assembly incorporated the town. In 1852, the Virginia General Assembly chartered the town of Buckhannon, and it later

became the seat of government for Upshur County, created by the General Assembly from parts of Barbour, Lewis and Randolph counties.

The town was not incorporated by the state of West Virginia as a city until nearly a century later, when the West Virginia Legislature acted on March 9, 1933. The first county courthouse was built in 1854. It was destroyed by a fire and razed in 1898. In the following year, the present courthouse on Main Street began and was completed in 1901.

Buckhannon remains the only incorporated city in Upshur County and the county seat, located in a beautiful, historic and recently renovated courthouse at the corners of Main and Locust streets.

Groundwork was laid in 1887 for one of the most significant events in the city's history when trustees of the Methodist Episcopal Church South chose Buckhannon as the location for its new West Virginia Conference Seminary on prime land in the city. The school opened on Sept. 3, 1890. The first of 70 students to enroll was Roy Reger of Buckhannon. Total enrollment for the year totaled 201.

In 1892, a college freshman class was added, and in 1903 a full college class schedule was added as the seminary was renamed Wesleyan University of West Virginia in the following year. In 1906, the trustees voted to rename the school as West Virginia Wesleyan College.

Down through the years, Wesleyan emerged as one of the top colleges in the region as it continued to grow and develop as the heart of the city. The college offers 45 majors and these degrees: Bachelor of arts, bachelor of science, bachelor of fine arts, bachelor of music education, bachelor of science in nursing, master in business administration, master of education and master of science in athletic training.

Another major asset of the city arrived in 1921 when the Pallottine Missionary Sisters established St. Joseph's Hospital in a former, elegant home on a hill overlooking Main Street. That veritable institution has been enlarged and renovated at least four times since its incorporation. Today, St. Joseph's Hospital is a high-tech hospital with a hometown touch, providing quality care with value and vision.

Upshur County boasts an excellent public school system, with the brand-new Buckhannon Academy Primary School in the city, five other elementary schools sprinkled around the county, Buckhannon-Upshur Middle School located in Tennerton, Buckhannon-Upshur High School about three miles south of Buckhannon, and the Fred Eberle Technical Center in Buckhannon.

In the last half of the 20th Century, the city and county attracted major industries, including the former Moore Business Forms, Corhart Refractories, and Weyerhaeuser (formerly Trus, Joist and MacMillan). In the 1970s, the area bustled

with a thriving natural gas industry, which has reemerged as a major economic force in a time of spiraling oil prices.

Four-lane highways, nearby shopping malls, then a Wal-Mart Supercenter and a Lowe's had the same effect on Buckhannon as they did on countless cities across the nation. The impact, as elsewhere, was most noticeable on Main Street, where such long-standing businesses as Murphy's, Perce Ross Men's and Women's Wear, Strader's clothing store and Home Hardware closed. For awhile that meant empty storefronts. But today's Main Street has active store fronts with restaurants, book stores, four banks, drug stores, computer stores, medical facilities and professional offices. Two of the most noticeable and appreciated features of Buckhannon arrived in the past 20 years:

- The 1.8-mile Elizabeth "Binky" Poundstone River Walk, which is enormously popular and used daily by dozens of walkers, joggers and bicyclers. The city worked with Wesleyan College, using a federal grant, to develop the trail along the Buckhannon River and skirting the Wesleyan campus along the river.
- A sweeping beautification project which has visually enhanced the city. The city's motto, "The Promise of Tomorrow with the Dignity of Yesterday" could just as easily be "The City of Flowers."

That effort began in the early 1990s when the Buckhannon Rotary Club, under the leadership of Bob Braine, converted an empty lot just off Main Street into The Buckhannon Rotary Jawbone Park, complete with a pavilion and a multitude of flowers. The flowering of Buckhannon extended to Main Street, then to other areas of the city, including the new walk trail.

Efforts also are well underway to develop downtown Buckhannon as a historical district.

About this thriving little city in North Central West Virginia it can be said that Buckhannon retains its traditional small-city charm and overall aesthetic attractiveness even as it morphs into the 21st Century of rapidly changing dynamics, brimming with confidence about its future.

C. Buckhannon 2009



Nestled in the foothills of the Allegheny Mountain and serving as the western gateway to the Appalachian Highlands, Buckhannon, West Virginia is listed as one of “the best 100 small towns in America” in Mr. Norman Crampton’s book of the same title. With a city and surrounding population of about 14,000 people, Buckhannon is located directly on U.S. Route 33, or Appalachian Highway Corridor H, a limited four-lane road which will connect Interstate 79 with I-81 and I-66 and a drive time of about three hours from Washington, DC.

A diverse economy based on specialty manufacturing, wood processing, agriculture, and the extractable industries of timber, coal, oil, and gas provides for a sustainable employment base that is complimented by a good public educational system, strong utilities infrastructure, and a high quality of life. With a nationally recognized, private liberal arts college in West Virginia Wesleyan (1,200 students) and 95-bed St. Joseph’s Hospital anchoring the downtown area, our turn of the century architecture on Main Street has an eclectic offering of unique restaurants, antiques, craft and specialty shops plus one of the few micro-theatres in West Virginia.

The arts culture includes a brand new Virginia Thomas Law Center for the Performing Arts, the Buckhannon Community Theatre, Chorus Society and Orchestra plus the Sleeth Art Gallery on the campus of Wesleyan College. Clean air and rivers are augmented by an abundance of outdoor recreation activities including hiking, biking, camping, fishing, snow skiing, hunting, and golf at eight state parks and national forests within an hours drive of the city plus the West Virginia Wildlife Center just 12 miles south of town.

III. BUCKHANNON 2015 PLANNING PROCESS

*You have to be very careful if you don't know where you're going,
you might not get there.* Yogi Berra

A. Background

West Virginia State Code (8A-3-3) requires that planning commissions “shall prepare a comprehensive plan for the development of land within its jurisdiction.” The code identifies 13 mandatory components of a comprehensive plan that must be addressed in a comprehensive plan: Land use, housing, transportation, infrastructure, public services, rural, recreation, economic development, community design, preferred development areas, renewal and/or development, financing and historic preservation. Plans may include additional components as deemed appropriate.

This is the first comprehensive plan for Buckhannon/Upshur. The Buckhannon Planning Commission has been in place for years, but the city does not have a comprehensive plan. Revisions to the state code in recent years require that cities with zoning ordinances must adopt comprehensive plans before their zoning ordinances may be amended.

The Buckhannon Planning Commission began meeting in January 29, 2007 to consider the process for developing the comprehensive plan. At a July 9, 2007 meeting, the commission created a working sub-committee to develop the process and timelines to proceed with the development of a plan to be submitted to Buckhannon City Council. Volunteer members of that sub-committee were City Zoning Officer Rich Clemens, who serves as the commission president, Richard Edwards, C.J. Rylands, John Scott and Alan Tucker. Since initial formation of the working group, Mark Hays, Debbie Huber, James Huber, and Elizabeth Lee have joined the group. Steve Foster, Executive Director of the Upshur County Development Authority, has been an active participant since its inception and serves as a liaison with the county.

The working group has met bi-weekly since July 2007. Initial action was comprised of:

- Adoption of The Small Town Planning Handbook planning process.
- Development of a detailed approach to develop the comprehensive plan
 - Adoption of the Buckhannon 2015 concept and to develop a mid-range plan of 5-10 years versus the longer range plan of 20 years or more.
 - City Council approval of the planning process and timeframes in October 2007
- Formal Buckhannon 2015 kickoff at the City Building on January 9, 2008.

The following sections describe the planning process that took place to develop this proposed Buckhannon 2015 Comprehensive Plan.

B. Information Gathering Phase

*What gets us into trouble isn't what we don't know, its what we know for sure that just
ain't so.* Yogi Berra

Just as one would not start a trip without first identifying the destination, the planning process first objective was to define our destination -- Buckhannon 2015, the kind of place we want the Buckhannon to be in 2015. To do that, the planning commission began the process by first gathering information about current Buckhannon. We used three major activities to collect that information.

1. Citizens Advisory Committee Process: The purpose of the Citizens' Advisory Committee (CAC) is to help shape the Commission's planning agenda, and the plan's development and implementation. The Small Town Planning Handbook recommends that a Citizens' Advisory Committee be comprised of 15-25 people from the general public that results in a "group of different ages, genders, ethnic backgrounds, length of residence in the community, occupations, and incomes." The goal is to have the committee comprised of a representative sample of its citizenry including business representatives, teachers, health care personnel, parents with young children, under 21-year old citizens, as well as representatives from service organizations, law enforcement and town and county personnel. During the planning process, the commission was able to secure the voluntary participation of 42 Buckhannon/Upshur community residents and the CAC comprised representation across all of the recommended categories of citizens. See the acknowledgements section for a list of the CAC members.

2. Surveys: The planning commission, with the help of the CAC, developed and administered three separate surveys:

- Community survey, which was made available to all Buckhannon and Upshur County residents. It was:
 - Based on the guidelines in the planning handbook
 - Piloted by the CAC and revised based on their feedback
 - Administered during the February-April 2008 timeframe
 - Posted on the City website for those who wanted to complete the survey on line.
 - Hard copies were placed in local government locations, banks, libraries, senior center and local businesses.
 - Local service organizations such as the Chamber of Commerce solicited their membership to complete the survey.
 - West Virginia Wesleyan College and the Upshur County School System leadership also encouraged their staffs to complete the survey.

Persons interested in obtaining copies of the community, high school and college student surveys can go to the city website or contact Richard Clemens, president of the Buckhannon planning commission.

- Buckhannon/Upshur High School survey, which was made available to all high school students in the April-May 2008 timeframe. Students completed hard copies of the survey.

- West Virginia Wesleyan College survey, which was administered in the April-May 2008 timeframe. The survey was posted on the college website so students could complete the survey online.

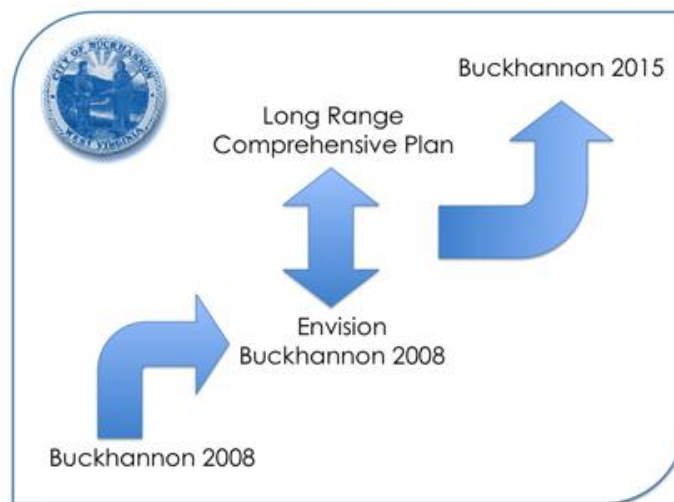
3. One-on-one Interviews: During an eighteen-month period, the planning commission held thirty-seven one-on-one meetings with individual local community business, educational, government and professional leaders. These meetings were non-attribution type meetings so individual leaders could be candid about community strengths and weaknesses and its future threats and opportunities.

These individual meetings corroborated most of what was learned in the CAC process and from the survey results. An extremely encouraging outcome of these sessions was the unanimous support for the Buckhannon 2015 process.

C. Envision Buckhannon 2015 Process – Part 1

It's kind of fun to do the impossible!

Walt Disney



Envision Buckhannon 2015 is a facilitated interactive process between the planning commission and the CAC with the intended purpose of identifying goals and objectives for the comprehensive plan. Part 1 of the process took place in two phases over a twelve-month process.

1. Phase 1 – Initial Planning: This phase kicked off on February 9, 2008 at a CAC meeting held at CJ Maggie's where the CAC provide feedback on the draft community survey and identified the community's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, known as a SWOT analysis. Results of the SWOT analysis are as follows.

Rank	Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
1	Community sense of	Workforce opportunities	Corridor H and	Lack of plan

	pride - Volunteerism spirit - Friendly people - One community (Buckhannon & surrounding areas)	& skill development capability - Limited opportunities - Current education structure inadequate for future	transportation accessibility offers good opportunities for the city and county	implementation - Fear of change - Not buying in - County/city competition & non-cooperation (reactive only)
2	Small college town atmosphere - Quality of life - Nice pace of life - Safe, secure community	Lack of recreation facilities and programs - Applies to all ages - Detracts from community well being & unhealthy lifestyles	Airport expansion offers additional opportunities for growth	Potential Corridor H impacts due to poor planning - Unplanned overdevelopment - Loss of Main Street - Infrastructure demand overtakes capabilities - Loss of quality of life
3	Major community assets - College - Hospital - Main street - Businesses/restaurants - Municipal services	Traffic flow & parking - N/S access thru the city or around the city is inadequate - Parking downtown, at college - Public transportation is lacking, need more routes & taxi service	Improved education for all ages to strengthen skills development to meet new business & professional opportunities	Loss of industrial base - Youth retention remains low - Job loss - Poverty increases
4	Location – accessibility - Corridor H - Regional airport - Central part of state & Eastern US	Lack of retail diversity - Limited retail shopping due to lack of retail stores - High rent for businesses is a detractor	Addition of retirement community and other community development along lines of Charles Point	Lack of funding - Drying up federal & state resources - Fails to support the plans goals & objectives
5	Beautiful location w/ rich history - Beautiful architecture - Aesthetically pleasing environment - Nicely landscaped - Walk trail	Municipal Infrastructure - Streets & sidewalks - Sewage system - Storm drain capability - Impacts from flooding	More parks, recreation facilities and arts & humanities activities/programs	

2. Phase 2 – Detailed Planning: This phase included:

- **Analysis of the survey results:** The results of the surveys were developed over the summer of 2008, with final reports for each survey published in August 2008. The detailed survey final results are not included here but can be obtained from the City website or by contacting Richard Clemens, the planning commission president. These surveys were then sent to the CAC members for their information in preparation for the second CAC Envision session.
- **Development of major findings:** The next step was to analyze all the information collected to develop two major pieces of information:

- What residents like or value about Buckhannon. The results of this analysis are provided in Section 1.B, “What we value.”
- What residents do not like about Buckhannon and what they want changed. Major takeaways in this category were:
 - Lack of shopping diversity
 - Lack of activities/things to do
 - Nothing for kids nor families
 - Insufficient recreation and cultural activities
 - Lack of dining options
 - Lack of jobs
 - Great place for retirees but not for families due to poor job environment
 - Concerns about local government
 - Too much secrecy
 - Lack of cooperation/trust across city council
 - Insufficient cooperation between city and council
 - Concern about inappropriate police behavior toward youth and college students
 - Poor maintenance of city streets and sidewalks
 - Limited downtown parking
 - Traffic congestion, noise, too much truck traffic thru town
 - Concern over the middle and high school effectiveness
 - Housing concerns – lack of variety
 - Lack of public transportation
- **Development of a draft future description:** In listening to what citizens were saying, the commission identified areas of consensus concerning the kind of community Buckhannon/Upshur residents want the area to become as well as remain. These expressions of community values provided the basis for a shared community vision of Buckhannon/Upshur’s future. As it is a detailed description, the planning commission is calling it Buckhannon 2015’s Future Description. The draft future description was also mailed to the CAC members along with the survey reports.
- **A very important note:** It is important to mention here that very early in the planning process, it became clear that local residents do not look upon Buckhannon as a separate entity from the larger Buckhannon/Upshur area. Community residents acknowledge that there are separate governing bodies for the city and county. But, they also acknowledge a very strong interdependence between the city and county in terms of the impact the governing bodies have on the local area’s future. In both the CAC sessions and several of the one-on-one sessions, the planning commission was encouraged to view the Buckhannon 2015 plan from the mutually interdependent perspective. Consequently, the planning commission did accept interdependence as the overarching framework for the plan. In reviewing other plans, it appears that many other communities have also taken the interdependent approach.

D. Decision Phase

To change and to change for the better are two different things!

German Proverb

The Envision Buckhannon 2015 process moved into a decision phase in September 2008 when it conducted a second CAC Envision Session. The decision phase runs through the development of the Final Report and is followed by the approval phase.

1. Envision Buckhannon 2015 Process – Part 2: On September 13, 2008, twenty-six CAC members participated in the second Envision Buckhannon 2015 meeting. Its purpose was two-fold:

- Finalize the Buckhannon 2015 Future Description. This description is set in Section I.C, page 5-6
- Develop the draft goals and objectives for each category. CAC members were subdivided into working groups and each group worked on goals and objectives for 2 or 3 categories. The result of this effort was a comprehensive list of goals and objectives to consider for the Buckhannon 2015 plan.

2. Benchmarking: On October 20 and 31, 2008, the planning commission conducted benchmarking visits to three eastern West Virginia cities (Moorefield, Shepherdstown, and Martinsburg) to meet with their planning officials to learn about their planning efforts with the expectation of gaining information that will be useful in preparing the Buckhannon 2015 Plan. Major takeaways included:

- All three municipalities have developed long-range comprehensive plans (LRCP), also Hardy County has a LRCP in place.
- Moorefield and Hardy County – Two things precipitated the development of their plans:
 - Concern about the bypass as it got relocated nearer to town than desired
 - Influx of summer homes and the impact on infrastructure.
 - County looking at creating areas of concentrated housing versus the county being split into 5-50 acre lots. The dispersed housing approach puts a tremendous strain on infrastructure.
- Moorefield/Hardy County's biggest strength has been zoning along Corridor H. They feel they have control on haphazard growth and have specific areas zoned for housing subdivisions, commercial and some mixed.
- Shepherdstown had a 1978 plan and due to the growth in mid-to-late 1990s, they realized they needed to update the plan
 - They obtained a grant, hired a consultant and formed a Citizens Advisory Task Force (1/2 residents, 1/2 non-residents)
 - Task force made lists of things that led to goals (contractor fleshed them out) (1998)
 - Task force held a public meeting (100 plus people)

- After a couple of revisions, the plan was accepted (2001)
- Some major results from the plan:
 - Planning commission revising zoning ordinances
 - Aggressive streetscape program - \$600,000 by the state and \$400,000 from video games/lottery revenue
- Martinsburg: Met with local Development Authority and Region official staff, not with city officials. Some useful information collected
 - The city of Ranson has a strong city manager, who through annexation and zoning has created a desirable bedroom community
 - Old fashioned street lights ample walking routes and pedestrian friendly areas
 - Uses a mixed-use zoning approach to make communities more like those in the past where people can walk to shopping, parks, etc.
 - Recognizing that poor people need affordable homes, the community is providing alternatives to trailers and run-down houses
 - Berkeley County has a strong Main Street program that includes side and back streets with an emphasis on foot traffic
- Contact Rich Clemens for the Benchmarking Trip Final Report

3. Develop the Draft Final Report: This activity is taking place in two steps. First, the planning commission took the all the results from the second CAC session and developed a proposed set of goals and objectives using the planning handbook as a guide to ensure that a comprehensive set of goals could be developed. The next step is to validate the goals and objectives with CAC members. The goals and objectives have been incorporated into a Draft Final Report and will be sent to the CAC for their review and inputs during early March 2009. Copies of the draft final report will also be provided to city council and county officials, city staff and the entire planning commission for their review.

4. Finalize the Final Report: Once all the feedback has been received from the CAC, the planning commission will revise the plan and goals and objectives and draft final report. This revision will be sent to the CAC members and then the planning commission will conduct a third CAC meeting and public meeting to discuss the report and obtain the final recommended changes. This meeting is tentatively scheduled for April 4, 2009.

E. Approval Phase

The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams.

Eleanor Roosevelt

Following the April 2009 CAC meeting, the official Buckhannon 2015 Report will be developed and sent to city council for review and it will also be submitted to county officials for their consideration. The target is to meet officially with city and council on TBD date and then participate in a joint city council and county commission meeting on TBD date.

IV. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Never underestimate the power of a few concerned citizens to change the world, indeed it is the ONLY thing that ever has. Margaret Mead

The Buckhannon 2015 future description, detailed in paragraph I.C, was defined by *Buckhannon/Upshur citizens*. It describes the kind of community residents want Buckhannon/Upshur to be in 2015. In essence, the future description frames the residents' mandate for the comprehensive plan. The following goals and objectives were developed in a collaborative process with local residents to ensure that their vision is realized. The reader may initially be a little intimidated by the length and detail of the goals and objectives. However, one must keep in mind that these goals and objectives are a part of a long-range "comprehensive" plan. There are numerous aspects of a community that must be addressed in a comprehensive plan and that is why the plan is so detailed and long. Readers can corroborate this fact by doing an Internet search of small town long-range comprehensive plans and one will see that this plan is consistent in length and in terms of categories and content covered in those plans.

The Planning Commission worked closely with city residents as represented by the Citizens' Advisory Committee (CAC) to identify the goals and objectives that they believed needed to be accomplished in order to achieve the Buckhannon 2015 future description. Those goals/objectives are set forth in the sections below which include all the state-mandate categories and selected optional categories. Each category includes a brief introduction followed by an overarching goal for that category. The goals and objectives are set forth in the following manner:

- Goal number
- Objective number
- Goal/objective description
- The recommended timeframe for completion. In some instances, recommended start and finish timeframes are shown. However, where only one date is provided, it is meant that the goal must be accomplished by that date.
- Comments/Rationale: For each goal/objective, the rationale is given for the specified goal/objective. In some cases, explanatory comments are provided.

We start with an optional, but the most critical category, Governmental, Intergovernmental, and Community Relations. All the other categories are moot, if government officials, private groups, and community residents do not buy into the goals and objectives and take the necessary action to work and achieve them. It should be stated that:

During the Buckhannon 2015 planning activities to date, ALL government officials and a large majority of community residents expressed strong support for the initiative and hope that the plan will result in real progress in terms of improving the Buckhannon/Upshur community by sustaining and capitalizing on the area's strengths, overcoming community weaknesses and capitalizing on our opportunities.

This positive perspective is the necessary first step in attempting to take on "real" change.

A. Governmental, Intergovernmental and Community Relations

Any idea can turn into dust or magic – depending upon the talent that rules against it!

William Bernbach

In the community survey responses, one comment raised a major red flag regarding the Buckhannon 2015 planning effort. The following comment must be dealt with proactively if Buckhannon 2015 initiative is to succeed:

- **“It is questionable that this survey will lead to any good or lead to real, needed change as it is the local government that must take positive action for the community at large, something they have not been able to demonstrate yet.”**

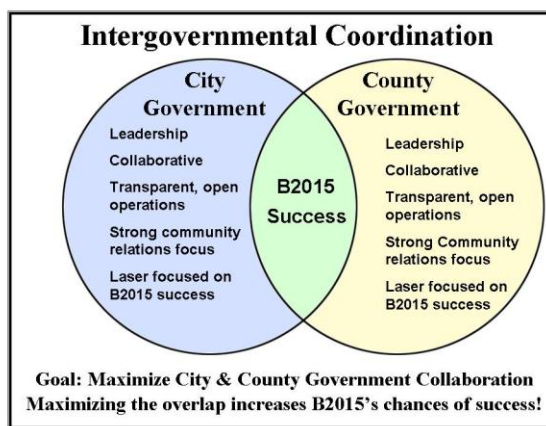
While the comment is harsh and in many respects unfair, it does point out the importance of the role of government officials at the city and county level to work in an open, collaborative manner to pursue Buckhannon 2015 goals and objectives. If the Buckhannon 2015 future description is to be realized, the Buckhannon 2015 comprehensive plan must influence how government decisions and the direction of how growth and change, and public and private investments are made. To exert the necessary influence, the Buckhannon 2015 Plan must be applied as a guide to decision-making both at the city and county level. While the state does not require a special section for this topic, many small town comprehensive plans include this vital topic in their planning documents, and The Small Town Planning Handbook also stresses that planning must be a cooperative and coordinated process at the local, county, regional and state levels. Consequently, “Governmental/Intergovernmental/Community Relations” is included as a separate planning category. During the initial Citizens’ Advisory Group meeting in February 2008, the perceived lack of city and county collaboration and the local government infighting were seen as the biggest threats to Buckhannon 2015 success.

Local government officials are urged to undertake the following goals because the success of the Buckhannon 2015 plan is dependent upon collaborative internal individual government, intergovernmental and government-community relations. A major strength identified during the planning process was that government officials and city and county staff to a person all expressed their strong support for the Buckhannon 2015 process. Pursuing the following goals with this strong commitment to make Buckhannon 2015 a reality, government officials will be able to achieve a high level of cooperation and coordination among their various agencies and with the citizenry of Buckhannon/Upshur community.

It is hoped that the city and county are able to successfully work together on selected goals. However, if the county is unable to collaboratively work on goals/objectives identified in this document, the city must pursue the goals as they are vital to Buckhannon 2015’s success.

It is recommended that the city and county adopt the “*shared goal*” approach to work collaboratively on shared interests:

- *Shared goals* are **bolded** in the plan.
- A “*shared goal*” is a concept that is being used by different groups that have a vested interest in the outcome of an initiative.
- Organizations that commit to work collaboratively towards a common goal tend to be much more successful and effective in accomplishing something meaningful for the people they represent.



Overarching Governmental/Intergovernmental/Community Relations Areas

Goal: Note: This goal was taken directly from the CAC recommended Buckhannon 2015 Future State Description:

“Long before Buckhannon 2015 becomes a reality, Buckhannon/Upshur residents are proud of the unity within the City Government and the cooperation between City and County Government leaders as they tirelessly work together and with local business, education and professional leaders to implement the Buckhannon 2015 Plan.”

Goal A.1: The city and county begin to establish new partnerships to pursue accomplishment of the “shared goals” identified in this Buckhannon 2015 Plan.

Note: The planning commission has not specified what the partnerships should look like, only that they are needed. The best approach is for the two governing bodies to collaboratively determine how to proceed. That approach should engender the greatest amount of buy-in between the two bodies. However, some communities have used the following mechanisms to pursue goals collaboratively:

- City and county officials meet six times per year to discuss shared goals/initiatives progress.
- At least once per year, they should meet to review the effectiveness and adequacy of the Buckhannon 2015 plan and initiatives.
- Establish interagency committees and task force groups to lead important “shared goal” initiatives.

- One community established an interagency executive steering commission to oversee the entire plan's shared goal initiatives on behalf of the two governing bodies. This group established working groups, oversaw the working group's efforts, approved plans and initiatives, and regularly kept the governing bodies informed.
- The bottom line is that the influence the Buckhannon 2015 Plan will have on Buckhannon/Upshur's future will be a product of the courage of its leaders to lead and its citizens' ongoing, active participation. The desired future will not be realized because people agree with, or feel good about, the actions the plan sets forth. It will not be a self-fulfilling prophecy. Rather, it will only be realized by steady progress in adhering to a well-defined game plan of effective short and long-range actions and a commitment to stay focused.

Leadership is the art of getting someone else to do something you want done because he wants to do it.
Dwight Eisenhower

Whether you think you can or whether you think you can't, you're right.
Henry Ford

Recommended Time Frame: Upon plan approval

Rational/Comments: The city cannot achieve Buckhannon 2015's future description by itself. The future description extends beyond the city's boundaries into areas that county and state also have visions and authority. Buckhannon is not an isolated entity within the county, nor does the county exist in isolation from Buckhannon. Buckhannon/Upshur is integrally interwoven in most aspects of its existence. For example, economic development benefits both governmental entities; Buckhannon's water supply is dependent upon the Buckhannon River, yet much of the river lies outside of the city; and shopping districts, St. Joseph's Hospital, and the Senior Citizens' Center are located within the city, yet serve the county as a whole. The list could go on and on. Consequently, this plan recommends that the city and county establish new partnerships to aggressively pursue the "shared goals" identified in the plan.

Goal A.2: Buckhannon/Upshur has fostered transparent and collaborative local governments that have brought people and groups together to work collaboratively to accomplish the Buckhannon 2015 goals and objectives.

Recommended Time Frame: December 2009

Rational/Comments: Healthy communities build bridges between different constituencies to work together to meet community challenges. Not only must city and county governments work collaboratively, but they must inspire their citizenry to get involved. Too often, citizen apathy exists regarding planning and development except when a controversy arises. This scenario could unfortunately describe Buckhannon/Upshur.

Objective A.2.1: City and County governmental officials, through a new sense of collaboration, have successfully overcome the complaint that they are not united, and do not work together effectively.

Recommended Time Frame: September 2009

Rational/Comments: During the one-on-one interview process with local business, government, and professional leaders, the planning commission heard many complaints about how local governments do not work together, there was too much turmoil and distrust to work together collaboratively, and too much secrecy involved. Community residents corroborated these complaints. If this type of environment continues, then Buckhannon 2015 is in serious jeopardy.

Objective A.2.2: Local governments have secured an exciting and greatly increased level of community involvement as they pursue the Buckhannon 2015 goals and objectives. (The purpose of this objective is to capitalize on the strong sense of community spirit that pervades Buckhannon/Upshur and to channel that spirit and energy into collaborative efforts to advance the Buckhannon 2015 goals and objectives to fruition.)

Recommended Time Frame: December 2009

Rational/Comments: Another common complaint aired in the one-on-one sessions was that government officials often stifle volunteer group activity and eventually the high level of volunteer interest fades away and the group disbands. The planning commission heard many comments of concern that the Buckhannon 2015 initiative would end up the same way.

For Buckhannon 2015 to be successful, it will require the enfranchisement of all community citizens and groups, and for government not impeding collaboration, but fostering it. There are many opportunities for local citizens and various groups (business, non-profit, church, school, service, etc.) to form a citizen committee to assist local governments with implementation strategies. There is tremendous desire on the part of local people to make Buckhannon/Upshur a better place as evidenced by the response to the community surveys and the number of people who volunteered to participate on the Citizens' Advisory Committee.

B. Land Use

Growth is inevitable and desirable, but destruction of community character is not.

Ed McMahon

The next several years will herald important growth challenges for the Buckhannon/Upshur community. Corridor H will be completed in the next five to ten years, bringing significantly increased traffic and people into our community. The energy industry has the potential for continued growth. Surrounding counties will grow, such as the growth taking place in Harrison County and people will be looking

for bedroom communities. Randolph County is aggressively developing its tourism potential, creating opportunity for more tourism in the local Buckhannon area. These forces can and most likely will greatly impact how land will be used. If we do not plan for the growth and allow it to take place in a haphazard manner, there will most likely be negative and costly impacts to our infrastructure and transportation. Unplanned growth may also create incompatible land uses that may impair the unique charm of our community. Similar negative impacts have occurred to cities in the Eastern Panhandle which did not plan properly.

The purpose of “land use” goals and objectives is to take into account growth projections and define how the area will grow, and more importantly defining how the growth will be managed. For Buckhannon 2015 to be realized, significant land use planning must first take place. The following goals and objectives are intended to get the City and its surrounding communities focused on developing a Future Buckhannon/Upshur Land Use Map that will guide the City in making its land use decisions for the foreseeable future.

Overarching Land Use Goal:

The extended Buckhannon/Upshur community has achieved a sustainable land use pattern that retains the area’s historic, small town character in a rural setting and sustains its natural resources and beauty for generations to come.

Goal B.1: In order to enhance land uses and manage and guide future development, a future Buckhannon/Upshur Land Use Map is developed for the city and “ten” miles surrounding the city which:

- Depicts existing land use patterns
- Identifies areas for future growth and development
- Shows potential annexation areas (if needed)
- Defines important land uses in the community
- Complements existing zoning and subdivision ordinances or serves as the basis for new ordinances and guidelines.

Recommended Time Frame: NLT March 2010

Rational/Comments: The map should depict the recommended land use pattern for future development which is compatible with the general character of the community and consistent with the goals and objectives of Buckhannon 2015:

- Providing a vision for the future depicting areas for future residential, commercial, and public development,
- Providing a guide for the planning commission and elected governing bodies,
- Laying the foundation for zoning and subdivision regulations and the capital improvement program, and
- Providing a sound realistic future land use map that gives the community an attainable overall land use pattern to work toward.

A decision will be needed early in the development process as to the scope (area to include) of the land use plan: city only, city and one mile beyond city limits, city and five miles beyond city limits, etc.

Objective B.1.1: Update the existing Buckhannon/Upshur Land Use Map.

Recommended Time Frame: NLT September 2009

Rational/Comments: Per the Planning Handbook, the first step in developing a future land use map is to develop a current working reference map. The City has a zoning map. This objective requires its review along with the collection of information that describes the existing land use scenario, e.g., number of acres per land use classification.

Objective B.1.2: Collect data and information about future demand for land for commercial, industrial, residential and public facilities.

Recommended Time Frame: NLT September 2009

Rational/Comments: Information can be collected in parallel with developing the existing land use plan. See The Small Town Planning Handbook for the type of information that needs to be collected.

Objective B.1.3: Develop and submit the proposed Buckhannon/Upshur Land Use Map to the appropriate governing bodies.

Recommended Time Frame: NLT March 2010

Rational/Comments: A community land use map is extremely important for directing future and private development in the community, and should be used by public officials and private developers in making decisions on the type, density and location of future development. With a well developed plan, the community can grow and change in an orderly and desired manner. Without one (no planning), Buckhannon will grow in a haphazardly manner and may lose the unique charm that its residents so enjoy.

Goal B.2: The City hires a fully qualified city planner. **Note:** It would be ideal to have the city planner in place to lead the accomplishment of the B.1 Goal above.

Recommended Time Frame: NLT December 2009

Rational/Comments: The City will face considerable growth and development challenges in the next 5-10 years once the Corridor H is finished. While the City has excellent, professional people leading its various functional areas, each is extremely busy with his or her individual responsibilities. The City also has dedicated volunteers on its various boards and commissions. However, many of the volunteers do not have the time to develop and oversee implementation of the comprehensive plans to meet the challenges that lie ahead. Consequently, there is a distinct need to have a professional who can lead City planning activities in the critical growth years that lie ahead.

Goal B.3: To ensure the Corridor H Bypass develops in a desired manner, develop and implement zoning guidelines along the Corridor.

Recommended Time Frame: NLT December 2010

Rational/Comments: Throughout this plan, there is reference about the need to control development along Corridor H to preclude unsightly and poorly planned, incompatible development in this area. The county and the city have already identified this need and have initiated study on the issue. This goal encourages that this initiative be accelerated for as early completion as possible, before the area's land has already been developed haphazardly.

Objective B.3.1: Annex a three-mile section along Corridor H on both sides of the city limits.

Recommended Time Frame: NLT December 2009

Rational/Comments: The first step in establishing zoning regulations along the Corridor is for the City to annex the property. Without annexation, zoning cannot be implemented.

Objective B.3.1a: Establish a City-County working group to develop an annexation proposal.

Recommended Time Frame: NLT September 2009

Rational/Comments: A joint working group would be the best approach to studying the situation and to recommend an annexation plan. (See goals G.1 and G.2)

Objective B.3.1.b: City and county officials approve the proposed annexation plan.

Recommended Time Frame: NLT March 2010

Rational/Comments: Self explanatory

Objective B.3.2: The Planning Commission develops recommended zoning guidelines for the annexed Corridor H area.

Recommended Time Frame: NLT September 2010

Rational/Comments: Self explanatory

Objective B.3.3: City approves Corridor H zoning guidelines.

Recommended Time Frame: NLT November 2010

Rational/Comments: Self explanatory

Objective B.3.4: City Zoning Officer begins implementing the new zoning guidelines.

Recommended Time Frame: NLT December 2010

Rational/Comments: Self explanatory

C. Housing

When it comes to economic health, housing is as basic as it gets.

Author unknown

"Giving people a choice of housing, a walkable environment, and a good network of streets is a formula for a higher quality of life."

Jim Durrett

Available, affordable, safe, and well-maintained housing is an important factor in the community's appearance and in its ability to accommodate growth. It is critical that the community has sufficient housing for current and future residents of differing income levels, including single-family and multifamily housing and for dwelling units to purchase or rent. In addition to the availability of housing, it is important that the condition and appearance of housing facilities and adjoining property are maintained in an acceptable manner as prescribed and enforced by appropriate zoning regulations.

Overarching Housing Goal:

The Buckhannon/Upshur area offers a wide variety of quality, affordable housing choices for current and future residents of all income levels.

Goal C.1: Conduct a housing survey to determine the total number and quality of dwelling units in the Buckhannon/Upshur community.

Recommended Time Frame: NLT December 2009

Rational/Comments: The housing survey study establishes current housing numbers and condition. See The Small Town Planning Handbook for more detail on the need for the survey. The county has some of this data which can be used as a starting point.

Goal C.2: Conduct a housing demand study to determine projected future housing requirements for the next 10-15 years.

Recommended Time Frame: NLT March 2010

Rational/Comments: This study must be completed as part of the Future Land Use Map development process as it will determine projected land use impacts for housing.

Goal C.3: Provide an ongoing system of inspections and ranking of rental properties within the City.

Recommended Time Frame: Early 2011

Rational/Comments: The intent is to improve the condition of rental properties and to assure renters a basic standard of health and safety and to improve the overall quality of

rental property available. Other locations (e.g., Morgantown) have existing criteria that the local government may be able to obtain, modify and use.

Objective C3.1.1: Hire an independent and qualified housing inspection firm to perform a survey of “x” number of randomly selected rental properties within the city and develop guidelines for life, health, and safety standards of rental property.

Recommended Time Frame: July 2009

Rational/Comments: The first step is to conduct an assessment of rental properties to determine what comprises substandard rental property conditions and to use these results to promulgate appropriate maintenance standards for rental properties throughout the community.

Objective C3.1.2: Establish basic life, health and safety standards for rental properties within the city and deny occupancy for any properties that do not meet basic standards.

Recommended Time Frame: January 2010

Rational/Comments: These standards can be published in a booklet (Rental Owners Property Maintenance Booklet) to inform property owners of property code requirements and enforcement procedures.

Objective C.3.3: Require every rental property to be inspected and certified to meet or surpass the established basic life, health and safety standards plus provide a scaled ranking.

Recommended Time Frame: Early 2011

Rational/Comments: This requirement will be spelled out in the Rental Owners Property Maintenance Booklet.

Goal C.4: Update and implement all local laws and zoning ordinances as they relate to non-rental housing properties and housing subdivisions.

Recommended Time Frame: June 2011

Rational/Comments: The goal promotes maintaining the charm of the Buckhannon/Upshur community by ensuring that all housing properties are maintained in an acceptable manner and that new housing are built as prescribed by the zoning ordinances and guidelines.

Goal C.5: The Buckhannon/Upshur offers a wide variety of sound, healthy and affordable housing choices for current and future Buckhannon/Upshur community residents.

Note: Researching the Internet to review other community’s long-range comprehensive plans, reveals that housing goals and objectives similar to those included here are commonplace. Those communities recognize the need to work this area proactively for

their citizens. An excellent example within West Virginia is Ranson, where the local government helps spearhead their housing initiatives. Another example in the local area is Charles Point near Bridgeport/Clarksburg.

Recommended Time Frame: 2013

Rational/Comments: The intent of this goal is to ensure that based on the housing demand forecasts obtained from the results of Goal C.2, quality housing will be available for all current and future residents, e.g.,

- Buckhannon/Upshur has the opportunity to become a bedroom community for those working in Harrison County.
- Buckhannon/Upshur has the opportunity to attract baby boomer retirees who want to move away from the metropolitan areas, i.e., become a retirement home destination (See Goal I.6 for further development of this concept.)

Objective C.5.1: Encourage development of quality and secure condominium units and other styles of housing to provide housing alternatives for those that do not care to own or maintain exteriors of homes or rental properties.

Recommended Time Frame: NLT 2011

Rational/Comments: Self explanatory

Objective C.5.2: Encourage development of quality retirement housing for local retirees to enjoy so that they do not need to leave their hometown to scale down their homes and to attract baby boomer retirees looking for a good community for their retirement years.

Recommended Time Frame: NLT 2012

Rational/Comments: Self explanatory

Objective C.5.3: Encourage development of new residential areas to accommodate future residents.

Recommended Time Frame: NLT 2012

Rational/Comments: Self explanatory

Objective C.5.4: Encourage development of an assisted living facility to meet the growing need for this type of facility in the local area.

Recommended Time Frame: NLT 2013

Rational/Comments: Self explanatory

D. Transportation

***“Truck traffic coming through town,” traffic downtown to middle school,” and
“need a bypass to Tennerton” or “need a truck rout.”***

Local resident comments in the Community Survey

Upon completion in five to ten years, the traffic flow along Corridor H is expected to double. This traffic flow will not only increase the amount of traffic into and through Buckhannon, but it is also expected to bring population growth and subsequent residential and commercial expansion similar to that experienced by towns in the eastern part of the state. The challenge for the Buckhannon/Upshur community will be to establish and maintain a safe, orderly and efficient transportation system that balances traffic flow and safety issues with the quality of life and the overall character of the local area.

The fundamental focus of the transportation goals and objectives is to enhance Buckhannon/Upshur’s community transportation network and to encourage the requisite planning that is needed regarding the transportation system impact of Corridor H’s completion and subsequent growth impact on the area. Several of the recommended transportation goals and objectives below were identified by the local citizenry through the Community Survey and Community Advisory Committee (CAC) processes. Consistent with the state-mandated guidance, this section addresses goals and objectives in the following areas:

- Vehicular, air and transit transportation modes;
- Movement of traffic and parking; and
- Pedestrian and bicycle systems.

Overarching Transportation Goal:

By 2015, Buckhannon/Upshur has established an improved, safe, orderly and efficient transportation system that supports, enhances and protects the downtown’s charm and character and the rural and residential character of the entire Buckhannon/Upshur community.

Goal D.1: As the downtown area is developed, it will be complemented by significantly improved downtown traffic flow and parking.

Recommended Time Frame: December 2013

Rationale/Comments: The Downtown Development Council, the Buckhannon 2015 CAC, and the survey results have all identified the need to enhance the appeal, vibrancy and vitality of the downtown area. Accompanying this desire is the recognition that one of the first steps to achieve it is to improve traffic flow and parking throughout the downtown area.

Objective D.1.1a: The city has successfully developed an improved traffic flow system through and around the downtown area.

Recommended Time Frame: Initiate NLT September 2009 and complete by 2013

Rationale/Comments: Planning must begin ASAP to be able to realize the goal within the year 2013. The intent of the goal is to explore all options for improving traffic flow through and around downtown and to identify and execute the best or most feasible option. Ideas that have been recommended during the comprehensive planning process include a system of one-way streets and the addition of a second Main Street type thoroughfare that parallels Main Street and has access to Route 20. No specific recommendation is offered at this point as the issue requires study by professional traffic engineering people.

Objective D.1.1b: Complete the plan and present the proposal to City Council.

Recommended Time Frame: June 2010

Rationale/Comments: Self explanatory

Objective D.1.1c: City initiates action to implement the plan with the goal of having it realized by December 2013.

Recommended Time Frame: December 2013

Rationale/Comments: Note: Target date may change based on planning results and funding availability, which behooves city council to initiate the planning ASAP.

Objective D.1.2: City aggressively moves forward with its current parking planning with the goal of beginning to implement improved parking NLT Summer 2009.

Recommended Time Frame: December 2013

Rationale/Comments: This goal is based on the principle that “the availability of sufficient, convenient parking, particularly for short periods, is fundamentally tied to the economic health of retail, service, entertainment and tourism business.” The city has been dealing with the parking issue for the past year. This goal encourages the city to finalize its planning and initiate parking improvements by summer of 2009. Then, as the overall downtown traffic plan is being developed, additional parking improvements can be planned and implemented

Goal D.2: Conduct a Comprehensive Transportation Study of the local transportation network to identify system improvements that will accommodate the traffic flow increase and subsequent community growth expected to be brought about by the Corridor H completion.

Recommended Time Frame: Initiate NLT January 2010

Rationale/Comments: The purpose here is to be proactive by identifying the needed improvements well in advance of Corridor H’s completion so that necessary action can

be taken to implement the improvements. **Note:** The Buckhannon 2015 planning group also identified from several sources the desire for a “connector road” from the Tallmansville Road to the Brushy Fork/Route 33 intersection. However, it was not included here as a current goal because the planning group felt that it can best be considered as part of the overall transportation study.

Goal D.3: Develop a truck route around Buckhannon. Note: This item has been separated from the transportation study as the need for truck traffic relief through the City has been solidly identified in the Buckhannon 2015 planning process.

Recommended Time Frame: 2011

Rationale/Comments: The goal is to divert the large amount of heavy truck traffic that traverses through Buckhannon via Route 20 thereby reducing traffic congestion, city street maintenance costs and noise and air pollution, subsequently improving the livability of adjacent Route 20 residential areas and the visual character of the town.

Objective D.3.1: City, County and State initiate planning for a truck route around Buckhannon.

Recommended Time Frame: Initiate NLT Fall 2009 and complete planning NLT Summer 2010

Rationale/Comments: For this Buckhannon 2015 CAC-developed goal to be realized, the city and county must partner on this “shared goal.”

Objective D.3.2: Implement truck route plan as approved.

Recommended Time Frame: Summer 2011

Rationale/Comments: Self explanatory

Goal D.4: Create a quality “pedestrian friendly network” throughout the City by providing safe sidewalks, crosswalks, and a well designed system of walk and bike trails.

Recommended Time Frame: Summer 2013

Rationale/Comments: This goal complements goal E.2 in the infrastructure category and H.2 in the recreation category. The city has initiated a project similar to the stated goal. The intent of this goal is to support the initiative and to encourage city council to ensure that the network is completed NLT Summer 2013.

Objective D.4.1: As part of the downtown streetscape improvement program, upgrade downtown sidewalks and crosswalks, and add bike parking/storage racks.

Recommended Time Frame: 2010

Rationale/Comments: Complete the downtown area first, and then move into the neighborhoods.

Objective D.4.2: As part of the walk trail project, complete a well-designed community-wide walk and bike trail system that connects all neighborhoods and parks.

Recommended Time Frame: Summer 2013

Rationale/Comments: Again, the city has initiated a project similar to the stated goal. The intent of this goal is to support the initiative and to encourage city council to ensure that the network is completed NLT Summer 2013.

Objective D.4.3: Highlight all pedestrian and bicycle sidewalks/trails with well designated signage.

Recommended Time Frame: Summer 2013

Rationale/Comments: Accomplish in concert with the completion plan for each section of the trail

Goal D.5: Encourage expansion of public transportation for the Buckhannon/Upshur community, e.g.,

- Improved taxi service
- Bus service

Recommended Time Frame: 2012

Rationale/Comments: Improved public transportation was identified as the biggest weakness in the community and WVWC surveys. There is a definite need for improved public service because currently senior citizens are the only residents with access to public transportation via the Senior Citizens Center. Recommend the city and county explore avenues to offer additional affordable public transportation by 2012.

Goal D.6: The airport has extended its runway to a length of 5,200 feet with parallel taxiways in place.

Recommended Time Frame: 2014

Rationale/Comments: The local area's growth can be greatly enhanced with the completion of the recommended expansion. New business will not only locate near the confines of the airport, but the expansion will also promote economic development throughout the Buckhannon/Upshur area. In addition, a form of commercial air service could become a reality with the upgrade of the airport's runway and taxiways.

E. Infrastructure

Any town that doesn't have sidewalks doesn't love its children.

Margaret Mead

The city has sufficient excess capacity in both its public water system and its public sewer system to accommodate foreseeable population growth and economic

development. The city has an excellent staff and programs in place to manage and plan for its basic utilities needs. The water plant is sufficient to handle considerable growth (approximately 27,000 people). If the city would double in population, the city can easily handle the new demand for water. The city also has an excellent savings program in place to fund a future plant, when needed.

The city has a very effective, dependable and reliable sewage treatment plant which routinely exceeds treatment requirements. Average annual flow is just over 50 percent of the design capacity. Wet weather caused extraneous flow into the sewer system can cause the flow to the treatment plant to increase to over double the design flow. Although the plant can handle that much flow, it does jeopardize plant treatment performance. There are also treatment issues relative to the low flow in the Buckhannon River during extreme dry weather. These conditions create special requirements for routine treatment parameters and for trace toxic pollutants.

The sewer system includes approximately 60 miles of collection sewers and 14 pump stations. Tennerton PSD owns and operates a separate collection system which discharges into the Buckhannon system. Buckhannon's sewers generally provide effective service, although there are a number of locations where sewers need to be upgraded due to poor performance or condition. The pump stations are effective and reliable due require constant attention to maintain performance.

There is a serious problem with extraneous flow (surface and ground water) getting into the sewer system. This is due to inappropriate connections, leaks, or broken pipes that allow extraneous flow into the system especially during heavy rainfalls. The collection system and pump stations have adequate capacity for current distribution of service demand, but a substantial increase in demand in any particular location could make that part of the collection system inadequate.

The city's storm sewer system includes a series of drainage systems to provide surface water drainage. Many of these perform satisfactorily, but there are also many problems. While the more serious problems have been resolved in the past 20 years, there are still many other drainage problems that cause severe difficulties. Regulatory programs have been put in place which help maintain drainage ways and help avoid problems caused by improper development.

The city's solid waste collection and disposal program is well managed. The city serves a large part of the county's residents and is capable of handling a small increase in population. It currently handles 800-850 tons per month and could handle an additional 50 tons. It offers recycling centers at the Crossroads location and at the transfer station. City residents have indicated they would like to see additional recycling locations and product lines expanded to include glass, etc. Staff retention and equipment needs are its biggest challenges.

Overarching Infrastructure Goal:

Buckhannon/Upshur's infrastructure continues to be well maintained and the required upgrades are initiated and completed in sufficient time to satisfy both projected population growth, and forecasted development and redevelopment.

Goal E.1: The city's capital improvement program includes an aggressive street upgrade and maintenance program to improve the condition and maintenance of city streets.

Recommended Time Frame: Start 2009

Rationale/Comments: In the community survey, city residents identified streets and sidewalks as one of their top five dislikes. In their written comments, residents indicated that they would like to see the maintenance of street and crosswalks improved.

Goal E.2: The city implements a timely sidewalk repair and maintenance program throughout the city.

Note: This program should coincide with proposed pedestrian friendly network identified in goal D.4.

Recommended Time Frame: Start 2009

Rationale/Comments: Many city sidewalks are not only unsightly due to their poor condition, but they also pose hazards to pedestrians.

Objective E.2.1: Divide the city into five sectors and complete one sector each over the next five years.

Recommended Time Frame: Start 2009, Complete 2013

Rationale/Comments: Recommend initial emphasis be placed on those sidewalks that will support the city-wide walk trail system.

Goal E.3a: Develop a comprehensive plan for storm drainage within the city.

Recommended Time Frame: 2009

Rationale/Comments: Storm drainage (extraneous flow) was identified to be a problem by city officials and local residents.

Goal E.3b: Continue to construct storm sewers and to implement other improvements to the drainage system.

Recommended Time Frame: 2009 and ongoing

Rationale/Comments: Additional storm sewers are needed to correct existing extraneous flow problems

Goal E.3c: Continue to aggressively assert control over the drainage systems within the city in order to avoid compromising their effectiveness and to prevent hazard to individual properties.

Recommended Time Frame: 2009 and ongoing

Rationale/Comments: Self explanatory

Goal E.4a: Continue to upgrade existing sewers in order to remove extraneous flow with the objective of improving collection sewer performance to customers, improving treatment plant performance, and to satisfying regulatory requirements.

Recommended Time Frame: 2009

Rationale/Comments: Action needed to correct known system deficiencies.

Goal E.4b: Extend and upgrade the collection system in order to serve new customers and support development.

Recommended Time Frame: In place prior to new development

Rationale/Comments: Self explanatory

Goal E.4c: Undertake upgrade, maintenance, and improvement projects required to maintain the performance of the treatment plant and pump stations and to satisfy regulatory requirements.

Recommended Time Frame: 2009 and ongoing

Rationale/Comments: Self explanatory

Goal E.4d: Proactively address discharge requirements into the Buckhannon River which could impact on the opportunity for continued growth.

Recommended Time Frame: 2009 and ongoing

Rationale/Comments: Self explanatory

Goal E.5: To continue to provide sufficient water, sewer and solid waste disposal services to the community now and in the future, the city provides the requisite operations and maintenance funds in its annual budgets and ensures that the city workforce remains stable.

Recommended Time Frame: 2010 and ongoing

Rationale/Comments: Self explanatory

Goal E.6: Enhance potential economic and residential growth in the community by encouraging and supporting the expansion of affordable Internet high-speed network access within at least a seven mile radius of the courthouse.

Recommended Time Frame: Start 2009, Complete 2013

Rationale/Comments: Potential growth in the region is dependent on attracting and retaining technology-based firms and their employees. The natural beauty of the region helps to draw individuals who demand superior bandwidth to provide access to remote job sites, family educational needs and increasingly delivery of entertainment.

Goal E.7: It is in the public interest and desirable in order to promote and preserve the general welfare, assure the orderly development of the city, and provide for the safety and convenience of its inhabitants, that all existing overhead distribution systems and

transmission lines of electrical and communication utilities, excluding high voltage transmission lines of 15,000 volts or more, be eliminated as soon as possible and that distribution lines and systems used in the supplying of electric, communication or similar associated services be placed, constructed, and installed underground.

Recommended Time Frame: As soon as possible, NLT 2015

Rationale/Comments: Self explanatory

Objective E.7.1: The city shall require that every permanent extension of distribution lines, circuits and systems and any service lateral providing permanent electric power service, communication service or other associated utility services shall be installed underground for:

- (a) Any of the following new installations: buildings, signs, street lights and other such structures where the service lateral is street fed.
- (b) Any new subdivision.
- (c) Any new development or industrial park containing new commercial or industrial buildings

Recommended Time Frame: As soon as possible, NLT 2015

Rationale/Comments: Self explanatory

Objective E.7.2: The city planning commission shall annually review with the various utilities the progress made towards accomplishing this goal.

Recommended Time Frame: As soon as possible, NLT 2015

Rationale/Comments: Self explanatory

Objective E.7.3: Wherever any part or portion of the distribution system of any such utilities in an area or district of the city is now located underground, such part shall remain underground and any replacement, relocation, reconstruction, repair and extension thereof shall be installed underground.

Recommended Time Frame: As soon as possible, NLT 2015

Rationale/Comments: Self explanatory

Objective E.7.4: All high-voltage circuits and transmission lines of 15,000 volts or more which are excluded from the requirements of this underground goal, construction of which is commenced after the approval of this plan, shall not be placed on creosote-treated wood poles or lattice towers to the extent technically and economically feasible, but rather two-legged or single-pole structures of metal or wood.

Recommended Time Frame: As soon as possible, NLT 2015

Rationale/Comments: Self explanatory

Goal E.8: The relocation of the power substation currently located near the entrance to the City of Buckhannon and along Route 20 just north of Buckhannon Crossroads.

Recommended Time Frame: As soon as possible, NLT 2015

Rationale/Comments: The current location is in an area of high visibility and property value, and the substation needs to be relocated to an undetermined location that would provide for increased safety, room for significant expansion and a more enjoyable visitor and resident experience to what has become the main entrance to a historical and upscale community. The relocation would also provide for a significant commercial development site easily visible to and accessible from Corridor H and Route 20.

Objective E.8.1: The City of Buckhannon and the Upshur County Commission through the Upshur County Development Authority encourage the responsible parties to design and develop a plan for relocation of the substation to an area that is safer, significantly less visible and more suitable for the expected growth and expansion of both the residential, commercial and industrial needs for the community.

Recommended Time Frame: As soon as possible, NLT 2015

Rationale/Comments: Self explanatory

Objective E.8.2: The City of Buckhannon and the Upshur County Commission through the Upshur County Development Authority actively encourage and recruit developers and commercial firms to consider the current substation property as a prime location for a significant development that would require the additional investment to fund the relocation of the substation.

Recommended Time Frame: As soon as possible, NLT 2015

Rationale/Comments: Self explanatory

Objective E.8.3: The City of Buckhannon and the Upshur County Commission work toward offering a developer or commercial entity an incentive package such as tax relief or other economic incentives that would benefit the community and provide for significant opportunities for jobs and an investment in the community.

Recommended Time Frame: As soon as possible, NLT 2015

Rationale/Comments: Self explanatory

F. Public Services

Without a sense of caring, there can be no sense of community.

Anthony J. D'Angelo

The public services category deals with issues associated with public, emergency, social, educational, disaster and community services with the intent of providing efficient services to Buckhannon/Upshur residents and businesses. The city is fortunate to have excellent emergency, fire department and police staffs providing professional public safety services across the community. However, the city must be proactive to ensure such services are sustained at a quality level as the local area grows.

Overarching Public Services Goal:

Through proactive organizational leadership and strong support from city council, the city continues to offer cost-effective public services to its residents.

F.1 Goal: The city's police force maintains and improves community livability by working with all citizens to preserve life, maintain human rights, protect property and promote individual responsibility and community commitment.

Recommended Time Frame: 2009

Rationale/Comments: Results of the community survey indicated that residents "feel safe" and appreciate the area's low crime rate. This finding attests to the excellent law enforcement services provided by city and county police forces. Residents strongly desire that the "safe community feeling" is maintained for years to come.

Findings from the surveys and one-on-one discussions with community leaders indicated that some police officers do not act professionally when dealing with youth and college students. During the plan review process, the planning working group received feedback that perceptions about unprofessional police behavior were not accurate. Subsequently, a detailed exploration of this issue was conducted. This additional study found that the situation was worse than originally determined and the negative police-college relationship was corroborated by college officials. Fortunately, the unprofessional police behavior is not true of the majority of the police officers. A few officers possess behaviors that are considered rude, often profane and occasionally threatening. Other officers are perceived to be fair and professional. However, in the eyes of students it appears the unprofessional few aggressively patrol the college area looking for any excuse to confront students and to breathalyze them.

The details of the additional study are not included here, but are available for those wishing to those who have a need to know. Working group members have met with the police chief and he has begun to initiate corrective action and has many excellent ideas to implement a community outreach program and to strengthen his department's effectiveness. The following objectives have been support Goal F.1 and have been corroborated by the police chief.

Objective F.1.1: To enhance performance and professionalism, the police department implements an aggressive training program covering topics such as ethics, professionalism, human and public relations, communication, investigation techniques and behavior, etc.

Recommended Time Frame: ASAP

Rationale/Comments: The police chief has already conducted a department-wide meeting to address the issue of police professionalism. He has communicated that he will not condone profanity nor any other type of unprofessional police behavior. He has developed a “citizen’s complaint form,” which he plans to implement in the near future. With this form, citizens will have the opportunity to document their concerns of unprofessional police behavior when seen or experienced. These are excellent first steps and should be followed by implementing the above training recommendations.

Objective F.1.2: The police department has successfully implemented a community outreach program with WVWC with the objective of improving policing relations with the college staff and students.

- This program must include active involvement by the police chief and include quarterly meetings with the dean of students.
- The relationship between the community, the college and the Buckhannon City Police is crucial to the long term success, growth and attractiveness of the community to potential students, residents, and employers. Lines of communication need to be open and remain open to enhance support by and for the community by all concerned.
- It is recommended that over the summer, the police chief and Sergeant Loudin meet with college officials to establish improved working relations for the coming school year.
- It is recommended that during the first week of the new school year, the police chief and his lead have a round table meeting with the college’s Greek advisor and Greek chapter presidents and officers/leaders of other school student bodies. The purpose will be to lay out the policing approach for the coming year and the mechanisms for reporting complaints about police behavior. Subsequently, the police sergeant should meet monthly the college’s Greek advisor.

Recommended Time Frame: Summer 2009

Rationale/Comments: The police chief and Sergeant Loudin have already met with the WVWC president and dean of students. This is an excellent first step in developing a police department outreach program with the college and should be followed up with the development and implementation of a comprehensive program.

Objective F.1.3: The police department has successfully implemented a community-wide policing outreach program with the objective of improving overall policing effectiveness, making police officers more approachable and improving relations with the community as a whole. This outreach program could include the following:

- Presence of the walk trail

- Downtown and community patrolling via bicycles and walking
- Establishment of a remote police substation at Wal-Mart
- Creation of a city police website to keep citizens informed and to provide a means for an online hotline

Recommended Time Frame: As soon as possible

Rationale/Comments: The goal is for police to be seen, to become more approachable, to promote policing and community relations, and to provide a more human presence in the community. The police chief has many good ideas (e.g., the remote substation and police website) and is committed to implement the outreach program in the near future.

Goal F.2: The city performs a comprehensive study of the fire department and emergency services department and develops a plan to address the identified shortcomings in a timely manner.

Recommended Time Frame: 2009

Rationale/Comments: The city has an outstanding new fire station, a dedicated paid and volunteer staff and a quality fleet of equipment. However, some shortfalls are currently known (e.g., EMS is short staffed, fire department manpower is a concern due to the aging of the volunteer staff and projected increased workload, individual equipment needs exist, disaster response equipment is needed, etc.) and must be addressed soon. **Note:** A current major shortcoming is the ability to respond to emergency locations in a timely manner. Major roads such as Route 20 through town are often congested making safe, rapid travel very difficult, which suggests the need for a “third” lane through town and to the high school. The transportation study recommended in the C2 transportation goal should consider this emergency response shortfall including a connector road to relieve congestion.

Goal F.3: The senior center develops and implements a five-year plan to address senior needs in the Buckhannon/Upshur community.

Recommended Time Frame: 2009

Rationale/Comments: The senior center provides outstanding service to local seniors, including shut-ins. However, it currently does not have a plan to address its future program and staffing needs. The plan will help focus attention on the improvement needs to better serve a growing aging community and should outline the funding sources for new programs and staffing needs, e.g., an activities director.

Goal F.4: The city and county works with the board of education to promote education excellence across the county school system.

Recommended Time Frame: 2009 and ongoing

Rationale/Comments: The community survey identified concerns about the local school system, especially the high school’s educational effectiveness. The county has a

new superintendent of schools who, with the board of education, is aggressively pursuing improved education efficacy throughout the school system. To be effective, the superintendent and board of education will need strong support from city and county governments. The intent of this goal is to ensure that support is and will remain strong and communication is open and often.

Goal F.5: The city and county fund a full-time grant writer.

Recommended Time Frame: 2009

Rationale/Comments: Funding for many of the initiatives recommended in this plan can be obtained from the many, varied sources of grants at the federal and state level. A full-time grant writer that eventually can be funded by the grants obtained will allow the city and county to be much more proactive in resolving critical issues facing each governing body and to allow the Buckhannon/Upshur community meet its Buckhannon 2015 goals.

G. Rural

I love the mix of town, farms and wooded mountains.

A local resident's response in the Community Survey

In the community survey, residents identified "the natural beauty, scenery and rural setting of the Buckhannon/Upshur community" as its No. 4 strength or "like" of the local area. Residents want this strength retained in its future and have made it an integral part of the Buckhannon 2015 future state description. As much of the rural setting of the local area is outside of the city limits, it behooves the city to work closely with the county to sustain the area's rural setting. How do they do this? As explained earlier, they do so by adopting the planning technique called "shared goals," whereby two or more agencies or groups work closely to define goals that enhance the overall good of the larger community versus working individually and often at odds with one another which generally results in the larger community's desires go unrealized.

Overarching Rural Goal:

Through proactive collaboration between the city and county, the Buckhannon/Upshur community sustains its beautiful rural setting for future generations.

It should be noted that several other sections have goals and objectives that support and complement sustaining the area's rural setting. Those goals and objectives coupled with those identified in this section will ensure the overarching rural goal is realized.

Goal G.1: In 2015, city and county leaders have exhibited a long history of working closely with one another and have sustained the local area's natural beauty, scenery and rural setting.

Recommended Time Frame: 2015

Rationale/Comments: The rationale is simple - the residents of the Buckhannon/Upshur community desire this goal to be accomplished. They want their governmental officials to protect and preserve the natural beauty and scenery of the local area.

Objective G.1.1: By December 2009, the city and county have established a joint working group to lead the effort to make goal G.1 a reality and they require that:

- A charter be developed and approved NLT October 2009
- By December 2009, development of a plan to accomplish the goal is in place. This plan should be a working document that is updated every year.
- A land use master plan throughout the county be developed, not for zoning but as a guide to protect the rural characteristics of the county.

Recommended Time Frame: December 2009

Rationale/Comments: Failing to be proactive will result in inaction and potential degradation of the area's natural beauty.

Goal G.2: Through implementation of the zoning guidelines in goal B.3, the city and county have successfully controlled development within a three-mile distance East and West of Route 20 along Corridor H.

Recommended Time Frame: December 2010

Rationale/Comments: The rationale here is consistent with goal B.3's rational, which is to ensure that development along Corridor H takes place in a desired manner, thereby protecting its natural beauty and rural setting. **Note:** This goal and B.3 should be the first action managed by the joint working group.

H. Recreation

“Lack of organized recreational activities” and “having to drive to other places for recreation because not much is offered in the area.”

Typical resident responses from the Community Survey

The lack of activities in the local community was the second biggest dislike/weakness identified by residents and students in the various surveys. Representative comments from the survey include: “lack of organized recreational activities” and “driving to other places for recreation because there is not much offered in the area.” Residents identified the need for ball fields, tennis courts, skating rink, miniature golf, a downtown pool, a YMCA and/or a community recreation center.

Two Buckhannon/Upshur community initiatives are underway that will begin to address the recreation weakness. First, the county is planning to create an outdoor

recreation complex on Brushy Fork Road near the planned new Army National Guard Armory. This facility represents a first step in addressing the recreation needs of the county. The second initiative involves expanding the walk/bike trail from the river walk to various spots in the city including connecting it with the new recreation complex on Brushy Fork Road. City and county officials are to be commended for these initiatives. However, much more needs to be accomplished to rectify the lack of recreation facilities and programs for Buckhannon/Upshur residents of all ages.

Overarching Recreation Goal:

The Buckhannon/Upshur community has a robust system of parks and recreational facilities designed to serve the variety of recreation needs of its citizens and which make the community an outstanding place for families to raise their children, and for people in general to live.

Goal H.1: By Spring 2013, the city and county will open a Buckhannon/Upshur Community Recreation Center that provides year-round recreational, social, and educational activities for all ages. As a minimum, the B/U Recreational Center should include/offer

- Indoor and outdoor facilities for various types of sporting programs/activities
- A fitness center offering a wide-variety of wellness programs
- A wide variety of youth related activities, both after school hours and during the summer
- State of the art Internet and computer technology
- Facilities and activities for families and seniors

Recommended Time Frame: May 2013

Rationale/Comments: This goal ranks in the top three of all the recommended goals in the Buckhannon 2015 Plan.

- Residents have identified the need and desire to have such a complex as described in the Buckhannon 2015 future description. Lack of recreation facilities and organized recreational activities was the No. 2 overall community weakness. A community recreation center would play a major role in addressing this Buckhannon/Upshur community deficiency.
 - The facility could house a much needed YMCA program for our youth.
 - It can also house much needed facilities to address family and senior program/activity needs.
- Accomplishing this goal will require close cooperation between the city and the county. Consequently, these governmental agencies should pursue this goal from a “shared goal” perspective.
- This initiative might also use private/charity funds, e.g., rather than each church building their own family life center, they instead financially support a community center with a YMCA.

Objective H.1.1: Establish a Recreation Facility Joint Task Force comprised of influential community leaders to plan for and oversee the completion of this much needed community facility.

Recommended Time Frame: June 2009

Rationale/Comments: For this goal to be realized, it will need influential community leaders to drive the planning and execution process much like the Buckhannon/Upshur High School football field project. Recommend that these leaders be selected from city and county residents, and that the task force be established as quickly as possible.

Objective H.1.2: Ground breaking takes place by January 1, 2012.

Recommended Time Frame: January 2012

Rationale/Comments: Self explanatory

Objective H.1.3: On June 1, 2013, city and county officials conduct the Buckhannon/Upshur Recreation Community Center ribbon-cutting ceremony.

Recommended Time Frame: June 2013

Rationale/Comments: Self explanatory

Goal H.2: By Summer 2013, the city has completed its planned community-wide walk and bike trail system. **Note.** This goal complements goal D.4

Recommended Time Frame: June 2013

Rationale/Comments: This goal strongly supports the city's current initiative to expand the walk/bike trail throughout the city and to key locations in the county such as the high school and the planned Brushy Fork outdoor recreation complex.

Recommend the city develop a plan that will allow the walk/bike system be completed in a timely manner. Recommend that grant money continue to be pursued to support this goals completion. As a final section of the walk/bike system, this goal recommends that system is connected with new recreation center when it is opened in the summer of 2013.

Goal H.3: By Summer 2013, the city has upgraded the walk/bike trail system with exercise stations, benches, bike racks and appropriate signage that complements and enhances the walk/bike trail system.

Recommended Time Frame: June 2013

Rationale/Comments: This goal complements goal H.2 by adding features that

- promote wellness activities along the walk/bike system,
- provide benches for those desiring to rest and relax,
- provide places where people can park their bikes along the trail, and
- inform walkers/riders about the "rules of the trail" as well as pointing out relevant historical or ecology information, i.e., make the walk trail interesting

Goal H.4: By June 1, 2015, the “Heart of West Virginia” walk and bike trail is completed connecting Weston-Buckhannon-Elkins-Philip-Buckhannon.

Recommended Time Frame: June 2015

Rationale/Comments: The goal here is develop a regional-wide walk and bike trail system through the heart of West Virginia much like regional trail systems that exist in other parts of the country, e.g., the C&O Bike Path that runs from Washington, D.C., through Northern Virginia, Eastern West Virginia to Hancock, Maryland. Closer to home, Elkins has a walk/bike trail to Tucker County area.

A trail system of this type would be a major draw to the region from early spring through the autumn color peak season. It would open up opportunities to major marathon runs to potential national iron-man contests.

Goal H.5: By January 1, 2015, the city has established a recreation and amusement park on the land that may be vacated by the Split Rail Company. The vacated area is suited for a number of outdoor entertainment and recreational purposes:

- Picnic areas
- Miniature golf course
- Water park
- Climbing wall
- Laser tag and video game area
- Paintball area
- Outdoor entertainment area such as band concerts
- Ball fields
- Locale for the Strawberry Festival rides

Note: This goal supports the overarching goal for the Natural Resources and Conservation category (Section O) as it restores/reclaims a very important part of the city that lies alongside one of the county’s most important natural resources, the Buckhannon River.

Recommended Time Frame: January 2015

Rationale/Comments: The intent with this goal is to reclaim this valuable area that borders the Buckhannon River, which will complement the river walk and will create a major recreational area that will complement the proposed community recreation center and Brushy Fork outdoor recreation complex. It would give Buckhannon the finest recreational facilities in the state and would greatly enhance the livability of the Buckhannon/Upshur community.

- This goal also will restore the natural beauty of this part of Buckhannon, making the stretch from Main Street east to the college and then along the stretch of College Avenue, the centerpiece of Buckhannon’s scenic attraction.
- The proximity of the College is also a great advantage as features such as the paintball arena, climbing wall, miniature golf course, and laser tag area could be managed by college students, a concept used in some other college communities.

- This particular goal was identified initially by the Downtown Development Council and surfaced again during the Citizens' Advisory Committee process.

I. Economic Development

The 5 Bs - bricks, banners, balloons, benches and berms - do NOT create streetlife. It is the available shopping that provides it.

Andres Duany

Be the change you want to see.

Mahatma Gandhi

Adhering to the state guidelines, this category is to include goals and objectives that promote economic growth and vitality for current and anticipated future residents. The focus of this economic development section will be for the entire Buckhannon/Upshur area, because it is shortsighted to focus on the city only: What's good for Buckhannon is good for Upshur and vice versa. Fortunately, the Buckhannon/Upshur area's economic situation has remained relatively stable over the past five years with an unemployment rate below 5% and as of August 2008 was 3.8%. Due to the efforts of the Upshur County Development Authority and city and county officials over the past five years, several new businesses have located in the local area, including ICG Coal Company, Aleris International, Appalachian Forest Products, Universal Well Services, Lowe's, and many small businesses. Unfortunately, the local area has lost valued businesses also. Many downtown businesses have closed during that time period.

The creation of stable jobs is important to the future of any community. Equally important is helping existing businesses and employers grow and expand. Job and business creation and sustainment rarely happens by chance. It requires respect and cooperation between governmental officials and business owners, and active working partnerships between city and county staff, city and county officials, the chamber of commerce and the private business sector. It is hoped that this plan will spur a new commitment and cooperation among all parties with a shared vision to promote and sustain the Buckhannon/Upshur community prosperity. A united, shared approach will allow Buckhannon/Upshur to move forward using resources more efficiently and accomplish goals and objectives in a more-timely manner.

Overarching Economic Development Goal:

By 2015, the Buckhannon/Upshur community has sustained a vibrant, healthy, diverse economic climate that includes a strong downtown and offers stable employment opportunities for its residents to enjoy a good quality of life.

Goal I.1: The city has hired a downtown/Main Street coordinator to lead retail business development (e.g., new retail shopping and sit-down restaurants) planning and execution for the downtown area and to serve as a small business advocate/facilitator to assist in the opening/retention/expansion of small businesses within the city.

Recommended Time Frame: ASAP in 2009

Rationale/Comments: A lack of retail shopping and a lack of sit-down eating establishments were rated the two biggest weaknesses or dislikes about Buckhannon.

Buckhannon's downtown/main street is one of the city's crown jewels. To attract new retail stores and sit down restaurants and to retain current retail and professional businesses, there is a strong need for a city position such as a downtown coordinator, one whose responsibility is to lead development efforts for the city. The need for such a position was corroborated during the one-on-one meetings with city business and government leaders, who recognize that there really isn't a full-time, active champion for the downtown area. With this position filled and working closely with the executive development authority, the city and county would have a much stronger capability to attract new business for Buckhannon. Note, the downtown coordinator will be the city's representative in the Create Buckhannon initiative identified in goal I.2 below.

Goal I.2: By December 2010, Buckhannon/Upshur has established a well earned reputation as an "Entrepreneur Friendly Community" through a program called "Create Buckhannon/Upshur."

Recommended Time Frame: December 2010

Rationale/Comments: The intent of this goal is to use the resources of Create West Virginia to help Buckhannon become a successful creative community in the new economy. Create West Virginia is an organization that is about two years old and is "dedicated to building creative communities in West Virginia." The group has assisted numerous cities and towns in establishing a structure to help them energize their economy and assist them in their renewal efforts. Readers can become more knowledgeable about the organization and their exciting work by going to www.createwv.com.

Objective I.2.1: Using the resources of "Create West Virginia," the city and county have structured and begun to implement a Create Buckhannon/Upshur program to attract new businesses and retain current businesses. Note: See goal N.9 in tourism category for a complementing goal.

Recommended Time Frame: Spring 2009

Rationale/Comments: Buckhannon/Upshur needs a new initiative around which city and county officials and business leaders can unite to create a critical mass of positive energy to grow the community's economy. The UCDA has already begun to foster Create West Virginia initiatives. It is recommended that an expanded Create Buckhannon/Upshur program be initiated that can be built upon the ingenuity of the talented people of the local community.

Objective I.2.2: The city and county has successfully worked with local banks to develop a risk pool of capital to successfully support Create Buckhannon/Upshur.

Recommended Time Frame: Fall 2009

Rationale/Comments: Programs like these need capital to be successful. This objective involves obtaining the financial support of local banks, which in the long run will benefit from an expanded economy.

Objective I.2.3: The city and county has successively pursued favorable rents from landlords for retail business ventures in support of Create Buckhannon/Upshur.

Recommended Time Frame: Fall 2009

Rationale/Comments: Programs like these also require the support of local business and facility owners. This objective involves obtaining support from local landlords to assist new businesses in establishing a foothold in the community.

Objective I.2.4: The Create Buckhannon/Upshur team adopts the detailed asset mapping of resources (creative and physical) developed by the UCDA and it uses in executing its program.

Recommended Time Frame: Fall 2009

Rationale/Comments: This objective will ensure the local Create team has all the resources and information readily accessible to be able to maneuver seamlessly in assisting new businesses to locate in the local community.

Goal I.3: Develop future retail/commercial areas in a high quality manner to complement Buckhannon's "small town" atmosphere. **Note:** This goal complements goal B.1 which recommends the development of a proposed land use map. The map should identify areas for future economic growth and development.

Recommended Time Frame: 2010 and onwards

Rationale/Comments: While city residents encourage a diversity of economic development activity throughout the local community, they desire that new commercial and office development complements its small town and rural atmosphere, and does not create ugly sprawl nor harms our scenery and natural habitats. Consequently, the proposed land use mapping recommended in goal B.1 and the subsequent zoning regulations promulgation must be one of the first initiatives undertaken in the Buckhannon 2015 implementation.

Objective I.3.1: Develop commercial and office facilities in planned centers of compact clusters as opposed to extended strip developments.

Recommended Time Frame: 2010

Rationale/Comments: See rationale above in I.3

Objective I.3.2: Require new commercial building/facilities to meet approved architectural designs and facility guidelines. See goal J.2 in the community design section.

Recommended Time Frame: 2010

Rationale/Comments: See rationale above in I.3

Goal I.4: To facilitate attracting new businesses, establish “digital” infrastructure in the desired commercial and office locations as specified in the approved land use map.

Note: This goal is compatible with goal E.6 in the Infrastructure category.

Recommended Time Frame: 2010

Rationale/Comments: The new economy is a “digital economy.” To be competitive for new businesses in the new economy, communities must have a robust digital infrastructure in place. Cities and towns that have robust digital infrastructure will be the winners. This goal recommends that Buckhannon/Upshur become known for its state of the art infrastructure, whereby strengthening its capability to attract new business. Timely expansion of the airport as recommended in goal D.6 and the establishment of a robust digital infrastructure would create a major strength for economic development for Buckhannon/Upshur and the entire region benefiting Barbour, Lewis, Randolph, and Upshur counties.

Goal I.5: The city and county has successfully implemented a trade skills development program which has increased high school students opportunities to develop trade skills that are readily marketable to the Buckhannon/Upshur industry base, especially the coal, oil, gas, and wind industries.

Recommended Time Frame: 2010

Rationale/Comments: The intent of this goal is for industry and school officials to be proactive in helping our youth who are not interested in going to college to become better prepared to enter the workforce with marketable skills that will meet local industry needs. Accomplishment of this goal would be a win-win for our youth and local industry.

Objective 1.5.1: The city and county has established a trade skills leadership forum to develop a program that will make goal I.5 a reality. The forum should be comprised of individuals representing the local industry base and with representatives from the high school and Fred Eberle Career Technical Center.

Recommended Time Frame: 2010

Rationale/Comments: Potential program activities include:

- Creation of a website on trade skills development in Upshur County
- Establishment of a trade skills job databank for the community and the training needed to fill the positions
- Implementation of a program where business leaders are invited to classrooms to discuss job opportunities, their requirements, and how to prepare for those opportunities
- Periodic youth job fairs to discuss opportunities for the younger workforce

Goal 1.6: Buckhannon/Upshur has successfully promoted itself as an attractive retirement community. **Note:** This goal is compatible with goal C.5 in the housing category

Recommended Time Frame: 2012

Rationale/Comments: Over the next 5-10 year period, baby boomers will be retiring in significant numbers. Many will want to move away from congested urban centers with high taxes and high crime. They will look for the Buckhannon's of the country to live. They will look for places that are safe; clean; quiet but accessible to larger communities; and communities where they can be involved, have access to recreation and live with nice people.

A successful retiree attraction program would lead to:

- new housing construction and existing housing renovations that support the economy,
- increased spending ability for local businesses,
- a strong customer base for downtown eateries,
- increased tax revenue,
- a larger pool of people to volunteer for community activities, and
- support needed for the addition of a continuous care retirement center in the community.

This is a goal that requires a good marketing strategy and may be suitable to groups like the Chamber of Commerce and BURMA to develop and execute in close cooperation with the UCDA and the proposed downtown/Main Street coordinator and local realtors.

J. Community Design

If the city is not well-designed, its impact on the surrounding nature will be lethal.

Javier Cenicacelaya

Under the state guidelines, this section should include goals, plans and programs that are consistent with the land use component and that promote a sense of community, character and identity. Results of the community and student surveys and feedback from the one-on-one sessions with community leaders and from the Citizens Advisory Committee envisioning process clearly communicate that residents love the charm, character and friendly atmosphere of the Buckhannon/Upshur community. They love the visual quality of the city as defined by an appealing historic, downtown area; quaint neighborhoods containing historic homes, open green spaces, and beautiful churches; a picturesque West Virginia Wesleyan College campus; and the scenic vistas of rolling green hillsides and the meandering Buckhannon River. It is extremely important to its residents that future land use changes and development do not impair this community's character. Their hope for Buckhannon in 2015 is that it continues to have a strong sense of place and of community and a way of life that is based on its rich heritage. They expect government officials to prudently pursue policies and investments that strengthen and celebrate Buckhannon/Upshur's strong small town character and history.

Overarching Community Design Goal:

Through exceptional community design, Buckhannon/Upshur has preserved and enhanced the community's character and charm for future generations to enjoy.

The following set of goals and objectives is intended to support residents' desires to maintain the community's sense of character and meet the overarching goal. However, these goals and objectives are just a first step in defining the community design goals. These goals will be impacted by the completion of the future Buckhannon/Upshur land use map specified in goal B.1 and the transportation study specified in goal D.2, and this set of goals/objectives should be revisited upon completion of the approved land use map and the transportation plan, as a community's design is integrally interwoven with its land use and transportation network.

Goal J.1: City of Buckhannon has expanded the existing zoning plan review process to include a building plan review process, which will require all building projects, new construction, modification to existing structures, or demolition, to meet the requirements set forth prior to receiving a building permit.

Recommended Time Frame: 2010

Rationale/Comments: If the city is to protect and preserve its community character and control how development, building and land renewal, and growth take place, it must have an effective building plan review process in place.

Objective J.1.1: The planning commission has secured city council approval of a building plan review process.

Recommended Time Frame: December 2009

Rationale/Comments: The planning commission should be charged with developing the review process for council approval and the process should be consistent with the Buckhannon 2015 plan and approved zoning ordinances.

Objective J.1.2: City has established review fees for the building plan review Process.

Recommended Time Frame: January 2010

Rationale/Comments: Fee structure should be developed along with the review process and should be approved by city council for adoption starting in January 2010.

Objective J.1.3: City has designated a building plan review officer, who will enforce the requirements of the new zoning/building code by reviewing submitted plans and specifications, visiting construction projects at stipulated inspection stages, and issuing certificates of occupancy at the successful building project completion.

Note: The building plan review officer can also serve as the city's building inspector, who will enforce all building codes throughout the city.

Recommended Time Frame: December 2009

Rationale/Comments: Concept of a building plan review officer should be presented to city council along with the recommended process and fee structure.

Note: This could be a role/responsibility of the proposed city planner in Goal B.2.

Goal J.2: City has established community design standards and guidelines that promote and protect the community's character and that are considered for every project. Standards shall be developed for:

- Building architecture (consistent with the surrounding neighborhood)
- Landscaping,
- Lighting,
- Signage,
- Streets and sidewalks,
- Utilities,
- Historical significance,
- Material and color,
- Functionality,
- Handicap accessibility
- Energy efficiency
- Orientation and siting (This design factor deals with protecting the natural beauty and ecology of the area.)

Recommended Time Frame: June 2010

Rationale/Comments: Note 1: This is a mandatory step to ensure the overarching goal can be realized. Enforced standards/guidelines are the gate keepers to preserving the identity of a community's character. Prudent development and enforcement of design standards are the critical elements of effective community design. To meet Buckhannon/Upshur's overarching community design goal, the city must adopt such guidelines and it would be preferable for the county to promulgate a basic set of design standards so as to mitigate some of the more run down areas in the county.

Note 2: This requirement could be outsourced to a certified community planner, who could in a timely manner provide a comprehensive, professional set of design standards for use in all development/redevelopment planning initiatives.

Goal J.3: City has developed and approved district master plans for the city's various districts. The following is a recommended order (target completion for the plan shown in parenthesis):

1. Downtown Business District (December 2010)
2. Corridor H zone (Spring 2011)
3. River Trail Corridor (Summer 2010)
4. WVWC – City Neighborhood Interface (Summer 2010)
5. Neighborhoods TBD

Note: Through the work of the Downtown Development Council (DDC) and a quick win initiative (street sign proposal) by the Buckhannon 2015 team, planning for the downtown area has been an item of significant discussion for 12-18 months. It is recommended that the city planner (see goal B.2) be hired ASAP to assist these groups in developing the downtown district map capitalizing on the many good ideas that have been discussed ad nauseam.

Recommended Time Frame: Summer 2011

Rationale/Comments: Master District Plans should:

- Built upon the community design standards/guidelines resulting from accomplishment of goal J.2,
- Define/specify all design aspects for the district to include:
 - Specified land use for the district,
 - Design guidelines for new development and construction,
 - Design guidelines for renewal and
 - Preservation of historic structures and land features,
 - Streetscape features including signage, lighting, tree and shrub planting, etc.,
 - Street standards that promote safe vehicular movement,
 - Guidelines for
 - Public utilities,
 - Sidewalk standards that promote safe pedestrian movement and connection with other parts of the city,
 - Protection of green and open space,
 - Protection of scenic vistas,
 - Protection of the Buckhannon watershed, and
 - Promoting the protection of floodplains and wetlands.
 - Become the master document for guiding decision making and investments in the district

Goal J.4: Quick Win Goal: As a first step in improving the beauty of the surrounding community, plant native shade trees and shrubs throughout the city, especially along streets/roads and require developers to plant trees and shrubs in parking areas and buffer zones.

Recommended Time Frame: Start in 2009, Complete 2010

Rationale/Comments: While landscape and streetscape improvement will become a specific section of the district master plans identified in Goal J.2, implementation of a tree/shrub planting program can be “quick win” in upgrading the beauty of the local area.

Goal J.5: Quick Win Goal: Strengthen/beautify community gateways, especially along Corridor H, using signage, landscaping and green space, period lighting and right of way treatments that make our “front doors” attractive, inviting and consistent with our community character.

Recommended Time Frame: Start in 2009, Complete 2010

Rationale/Comments: Our gateways are our front door to the Buckhannon/Upshur community. They should be appealing and inviting to those who travel the major highways. Like Main Street, they can give local residents a sense of pride and for travelers they can offer an appealing invitation to stop, browse, shop and eat. With committed focus, our gateways could be greatly improved in a year or two timeframe, and a gateway beautification project could become the starting point for the Corridor H District Master Plan.

K. Preferred Development Areas

Men do not love Rome because she is beautiful; Rome is beautiful because men have loved her. Leopold Kohr

...there's a reason that Elm Street and Main Street resonate in our cultural memory. It's not because we're sentimental saps. It's because this pattern of human ecology produced places that worked wonderfully well, and which people deeply loved. Jim Kunstler

State guidelines indicate that this section should be consistent with the land use component and should identify areas where incentives can be used to encourage development, infill development or redevelopment in order to promote well designed and coordinated communities, which prevent sprawl. The majority of the city of Buckhannon is already developed in terms of residential, commercial and public facilities and usage. The city should work closely with the county in their development/redevelopment initiatives as those initiatives impact the larger Buckhannon/Upshur community.

This section should be updated upon completion of the future Buckhannon/Upshur land use map specified in goal B.1 as the land use map should identify preferred development areas in and around Buckhannon.

Overarching Preferred Development Areas Goal:

Identified preferred development areas are consistent with the (1) Future Buckhannon/Upshur Land Use Map, (2) community's character and identity, and (3) community's ability to service new and renewal development

Goal K.1: Proposed development and redevelopment conforms to land use designations and are appropriate for the district in which they are planned.

Recommended Time Frame: 2010

Rationale/Comments: To ensure that new development and redevelopment are consistent with land use designations and with city design standards and guidelines, all proposed development must be approved via the building plan review process.

Goal K.2: As part of the district development plan effort propose in goal J.3, existing underused or abandoned sites within each district are evaluated for potential infill development.

Recommended Time Frame: 2011

Rationale/Comments: Infill development upgrades existing land uses. Infill is the use of land within a built-up area for further construction, especially as part of a community redevelopment or growth management program. It focuses on the reuse and repositioning of obsolete or underutilized buildings and sites, renewing blighted neighborhoods and knitting them back together with more prosperous communities. An example of infill development is the new city fire station.

Goal K.3: As part of the proposed Corridor H District Master Plan (see goal J.3), the land use plan portion of the district plan clearly designates preferred development sites that will foster the community's character and prevents uncontrolled, ugly sprawl.

Recommended Time Frame: 2013

Rationale/Comments: This goal complements goals B.3 in the land use category and J.3 in the community design category.

L. Renewal and/or Redevelopment

Creating and revitalizing places that foster conviviality is essential to the good life.

Mark C. Childs

Under state guidelines, this section would result in the identification of slums and other blighted areas and set goals, plans and programs for elimination of such slums and blighted areas and for community renewal, revitalization and or redevelopment. In the community survey results, one of the identified dislikes about the community was the number of dilapidated and abandoned buildings, and the large number of unkempt and trashy lots and buildings which detract from the overall charm of the Buckhannon/Upshur community. These unsightly buildings and unkempt lots are scattered throughout many neighborhoods, along major thoroughfares, in the downtown area, and in communities as one approaches Buckhannon, e.g., the Tennerton area. These unsightly areas represent an excellent opportunity to the Buckhannon/Upshur community to improve its visual identity in a significant manner.

Overall Arching Renewal/Redevelopment Goal:

By 2015, Buckhannon/Upshur has substantially improved its visual identity and community character by demolishing abandoned, unsightly, buildings and by enforcing zoning codes that ensure home owners and businesses maintain their exterior property per established zoning ordinances.

Goal L.1: By 2015, the city has executed a well-developed abandoned building demolition program.

Recommended Time Frame: 2015

Rationale/Comments: Abandoned/dilapidated buildings detract from the community's charm and beauty. They should be removed or renewed.

Objective L.1.1: The planning commission surveys the entire city and develops a proposed list of buildings/structures that should be either demolished or renewed.

Recommended Time Frame: Fall 2009

Rationale/Comments: The demolition process begins with an inventory of potential building to be demolished.

Objective L.1.2: The planning commission contacts all building owners to determine the owners' plan for the buildings/structures and to inform them that the buildings are targeted for demolition.

Recommended Time Frame: Winter 2009

Rationale/Comments: The next step is to contact owners to inform them that their building/structure has been identified for demolition and to give them an opportunity to present a renewal/redevelopment plan that would take identified structures off the demolition plan.

Objective L.1.3: The city council approves the proposed planning commission's building/structure demolition plan.

Recommended Time Frame: Spring 2010

Rationale/Comments: Upon completion of the owner validation process, the planning commission prepares a time based demolition plan to the city council for their approval.

Objective L.1.4: The city begins execution of the approved building/structure demolition plan.

Recommended Time Frame: Summer 2010 to 2015

Rationale/Comments: Schedule the demolition process so that "x" number of identified buildings are demolished per year with the entire process being completed by 2015.

Goal L.2: The city has implemented a monthly exterior property inspection program to ensure that home and business owner properties are maintained according to city code.

Recommended Time Frame: Fall 2009

Rationale/Comments: Accomplishment of this goal will ensure all exterior property within the city's jurisdiction will be maintained in a clean, presentable manner and that

neighborhood appearances are not impaired by trashy lots, poorly maintained landscaping, un-mowed lawns, and other ugly characteristics.

Goal L.3: The city promotes the development of a Good Neighbor Program whereby a citizens' volunteer maintenance force is created to assist aged and low-income families in maintaining their exterior properties.

Recommended Time Frame: 2010

Rationale/Comments: Most likely, there are senior and low-income families in the city that are unable to maintain their residence exteriors in an acceptable manner. The Buckhannon/Upshur community has a strong sense of community spirit and volunteerism. This goal is aimed at focusing part of that community spirit at helping those who are disadvantaged due to age, disability or income level in being able to properly maintain their property exteriors. In a sense, this initiative would be an ongoing Habitat for Humanity type program to help residents within the city.

Goal L.4: By 2015, through close cooperation between the city and county, Route 20 from the Corridor H gateway to the high school has been established as a community pride route by improving/enhancing the road's visual identity consistent with the goals in the Buckhannon 2015 Plan.

Recommended Time Frame: 2015

Rationale/Comments: The drive from Corridor H to the Buckhannon High School traverses through Buckhannon and Tennerton. To outsiders/visitors, they just see Buckhannon or the Buckhannon/Upshur community. If those travelers only travel that road and do not see the rest of the Buckhannon/Upshur community they are left with a negative impression due to the many unsightly properties along this stretch of highway. It is not a stretch of road that engenders pride for most Buckhannon/Upshur people. There are many unkempt lots which greatly detract from our area's visual identity.

It will take courage and dedicated effort on behalf of the city and county to rectify this blight on the community. This goal recommends that the city and county government come together to improve this highly traveled road from one of shame to one of pride.

M. Historic Preservation

"...these old buildings do not belong to us only; that they have belonged to our forefathers, and they will belong to our descendants..."

William Morris

Whatever is good in its kind ought to be preserved in respect for antiquity, as well as our present advantage, for destruction can be profitable to no one.

Nicholas Hawksmore

State guidelines recommend that communities specify plans and programs to preserve historic, scenic, archeological, architectural and other significant land or buildings so as not to unnecessarily destroy past development which make a viable contribution to the future. Buckhannon/Upshur residents recognize that the local area's historic and

cultural resources are fragile and irreplaceable, they make our area unique and enhance our small-town atmosphere and quality of life, and they must be protected and preserved. To ensure that the historic character of the local community is not lost, residents have made historic preservation and restoration a key part of its “Buckhannon 2015 Future Description.”

The Buckhannon/Upshur community is fortunate to have the Upshur County Historical Society actively working on its behalf. This county-level private, not-for-profit organization has as its mission the identification, preservation and perpetuation of all things historical on the county level. A small group of dedicated people operate the Upshur County History Center and Museum, which is housed in the historic Southern Methodist Church Building on Main Street, and a Document Repository and Research Center on Main Street. Individually, the city and county have taken action to restore and preserve its historic assets, the most recent example being the restoration of the Upshur County Court House. However, much more needs to be accomplished for the Buckhannon/Upshur community to achieve its Buckhannon 2015 Future Description, such as:

- Developing detailed design guidelines to assist the planning and zoning boards and property owners to make changes that are compatible with the architectural character and scale of historic district buildings. (These guidelines are recommended to be developed in the community design section)
- Review the effectiveness of existing historic preservation laws and amend the zoning ordinances to incorporate coordinated historic preservation regulations.
- Expand and strengthen signage and interpretive programs to make residents and visitors more aware of the wide range of historic resources in the Buckhannon/Upshur area.
- Utilize historic preservation as an integral part of tourism.
- Develop a reuse and restoration strategy for threatened and/or underutilized historic resources, such as the George Robert Latham home on Madison Street.
- Work with the Upshur County Historical Society to increase its ability to contribute to historic and cultural offerings of the local community, to raise public awareness of its existence, and to make it a must see stop for tourists in the local area.
- Develop a web site and collateral marketing materials to actively promote Buckhannon/Upshur as a destination for heritage tourism, see Tourism category for specific goals.

Historic Preservation Overarching Goal:

The Buckhannon/Upshur community has effectively preserved and restored its significant historic, architectural and archeological heritage.

Goal M.1: The city has established historic preservation district overlay zones to be incorporated into the zoning and building plan review Process requirements.

Recommended Time Frame: 2010

Rationale/Comments: Establishment of local historic districts and establishing historic building and zoning ordinances are the most effective methods of protecting and preserving the historic character of the community.

Objective M.1.1: Designate historic preservation district overlay zone boundaries in conjunction with the “historic landmarks commission”, such as a Downtown Business District, Residential Neighborhood Districts, College District, etc.

Recommended Time Frame: 2009

Rationale/Comments: The first step is to establish the historic districts. Work has begun to accomplish this goal and the city should adopt the overlay districts once developed.

Objective M.1.2: Assess and define the contributing historic structures within each historic preservation district overlay zone.

Recommended Time Frame: 2009

Rationale/Comments: This inventory activity is the necessary next in the process that must be accomplished.

Objective M.1.3: Develop a “historic significance” plaque program to display to the public and be mounted at each historic site/structure.

Recommended Time Frame: 2009

Rationale/Comments: Promoting the Buckhannon/Upshur’s historic and cultural significance through signage, brochures and other advertising methods is a prerequisite to promote heritage tourism.

Objective M.1.4: All utilities should be underground whenever possible. Those that only function above ground should be minimized.

Recommended Time Frame: 2015

Rationale/Comments: As ugly overhead utilities detract from the appearance of our valued historic structures, it is recommended that the city pursue Federal funds to place utilities underground in the to-be determined historic districts.

Goal M.2: City planning commission to establish a historic preservation program that will encourage property owners to preserve their historic structures.

Recommended Time Frame: 2010

Rationale/Comments: Buckhannon/Upshur is proud of its historic homes – their architecture showcase the beauty of the 19th and early 20th century time period and are reflective of the unique mix of culture and history in which the city of Buckhannon grew and developed. It is important for the city to retain these structures as close as possible to their original design, which is the intent of this goal. The goal also proposes

a process whereby citizens can nominate historically significant historic structures for local/state/federal landmark status.

Objective M.2.1: The city planning commission has established a process to help citizens nominate their historically significant historic structures for local landmark, state or federal status.

Recommended Time Frame: 2009

Rationale/Comments: See above rationale. The planning commission must communicate with/inform all property owners of historic structures about the historic significance of their property and the potential value it represents. This action should facilitate the landmark nomination process.

Objective M.2.2: Establish city tax credits/municipal fee waivers for qualified historic preservation projects.

Recommended Time Frame: 2009

Rationale/Comments: Incentives are needed to encourage citizens to undertake historic preservation projects.

Objective M.2.3: Establish a “façade restoration” program for the existing downtown storefronts.

Recommended Time Frame: 2009

Rationale/Comments: The goal here is to restore the downtown area to its original (historic) streetscape.

Objective M.2.4: Assist property owners in applying for state and federal tax credits for qualified historic preservation projects.

Recommended Time Frame: 2009

Rationale/Comments: Where appropriate, state or federal funds should be pursued to accomplish needed preservation projects.

N. Tourism

A positive attitude may not solve all your problems, but it will annoy enough people to make it worth the effort.

Local resident comment

Under state guidelines, this section recommends goals and objectives to promote tourism and cultural and heritage development in the area. Research shows that many small communities use tourism as part of their economic strategy. Even towns similar in size to Buckhannon that do not have a well-known major draw to attract tourists have carved out a niche to create sustainable tourism. Many smaller communities have developed a “name brand” for the town and have built a market strategy around their tourism brand. Elkins is an excellent example of how they have branded themselves as the “Heart of West Virginia” and have executed an excellent marketing

strategy to promote tourism. Fayetteville is world known for its New River Gorge branded tourism. Lewisburg and Greenbrier County is another well known West Virginia tourism destination that came about due to the ingenuity of ordinary people who could come together to re-brand themselves using their history and natural resource assets to successfully promote tourism.

Buckhannon is well known in the state for the West Virginia Strawberry Festival. The annual yard sale also draws numerous visitors. The French Creek Wildlife Center, is well known regionally, and is another community attraction. However, these three discrete activities and other visitor attractions do not make for a well-thought-out tourism program to create sustainable tourism. The community lacks an appealing website like the aforementioned state communities. We have little in the way of brochures, pamphlets and marketing material that promote Buckhannon as a tourist destination. Yet, Buckhannon/Upshur is blessed with a rich cultural and historic heritage, abundant natural beauty and outdoor activity potential, and is easily accessible via interstate highways, and in the next few years a completed Corridor H, which will greatly enhance our tourism potential. To become a tourism destination, the city and county must diligently work together to brand the area and to create and execute a market strategy to reach developed tourism goals. Without focused attention, Buckhannon will become a pass-by town much like Weston, Sutton and other communities that have failed to package and market tourism potential.

Overarching Tourism Goal:

Through a new sense of teamwork, city, county and local business organizations, and involved citizens have created sustainable tourism in the Buckhannon/Upshur community for generations to come.

Goal N.1: The Buckhannon Convention Visitors Bureau's board of directors has greatly expanded its membership to 12 to 15 members with the majority of its members directly involved in tourism (motel/hotel general managers, restaurant owners, fairs and festivals representation, Main Street organization representation, retail antique and gift shop owners, and local destination venue representation) and minimal participation from elected officials (no more than one from each municipality and one from the county).

Recommended Time Frame: Summer 2009

Rationale/Comments: A CVB board that is inclusive of differing tourism related activities and organizations and open to ideas from across the community will be much more effective than a small controlling group that does not seek out input from the entire community.

Goal N.2: As the following goals (N.3-N.6) refer to the entire Buckhannon/Upshur community, the city and county creates an executive steering committee to lead and oversee the development of a major tourism initiative for the community, with the goal of creating sustainable tourism.

Recommended Time Frame: Summer 2009

Rationale/Comments: An initiative of this magnitude requires strong collaborative leadership. An executive steering group comprised of key city and county stakeholders that can involve various entities such as the CVB, chamber of commerce, the local historical society, WVWC, etc. is needed to ensure that a well thought-out tourism program is developed. Consideration should also be given to using the resources of the Create West Virginia organization as they have significant experience in working with communities in this area.

Goal N.3: Create a “brand name” for the Buckhannon/Upshur area as destination location that can be used to market the area for tourism.

Recommended Time Frame: Fall 2009

Rationale/Comments: If the town is serious about becoming a tourist destination, Buckhannon/Upshur needs to decide what it wants to be known as in terms of its tourism appeal, such as:

- Nature based tourism: Hunting, fishing, canoeing, biking, hiking, walking, bird watching, etc.
- Heritage tourism: Focus is on special interests such as state/local history and culture.
- Casual tourism: Unique local shopping and variety of eating establishments such as café’s and bistros that make for a nice day getaway
- Cultural/arts tourism: Tourism that results from cultural arts performances, artisan galleries and outdoor concerts/entertainment.

Adoption of a well thought-out tourism brand can greatly focus effort and creativity to generate a new tourism strategy or revitalize an existing program.

Goal N.4: Create the tourism brand master plan that lays out the vision and the tourism goals.

Recommended Time Frame: Winter 2009

Rationale/Comments: The executive steering committee oversees the development of a comprehensive tourism plan that is built upon the brand name concept.

Goal N.5: Create and begin to execute a market strategy to accomplish the tourism goals.

Note: As a minimum the following is needed:

- An appealing website, examples are www.greenbrierwv.com, www.randolphcountywv.com,
- Self guided driving and walking tours
- Informative, appealing brochures, pamphlets, etc. located in all major regional resort and tourist destinations
- Tourism signage
- A welcome center/CVB that is housed in a facility that complements the visual identity of the community
- Development of a package for visitors looking to locate in the area

Recommended Time Frame: Spring 2010

Rationale/Comments: As this strategy is being developed, research results indicate that several key points must be kept in mind in developing tourism marketing strategies;

- Most travel trips last for 2-3 nights
- Most people plan their trips only one week ahead
- As time goes by, more people shop around for travel ideas on the Web (Therefore, you must have an attractive and appealing website)
- Females make 65 percent of travel decisions
- Tourism is about THE EXPERIENCE, you must create and the sell THE EXPERIENCE
- Word of mouth is often the way that most people learn about an area's attractions, and is by far the most persuasive
- If many people are passing through your area on their way to another destination, beautify your gateways and give the traveler a reason to stop, i.e., ugly gateways are a turn off to visitors

Goal N.6: Buckhannon/Upshur has created a sustainable tourism trade and is well known in the state and the region as a fun tourism destination spot.

Recommended Time Frame: 2012

Rationale/Comments: Goals N.2-N.5 are intended to build the Buckhannon/Upshur's tourism foundation. This goal is aimed at the regional planning and intermunicipal cooperation that must take place to make Barbour, Lewis, Randolph and Upshur counties a major tourism draw. By encouraging cooperation among tourism related interests in the region, all counties and their communities will benefit as they create a greater draw to the region as a whole.

Goal N.7: The city has created distinctive new entries by upgrading the city's gateways so that Buckhannon has aesthetically pleasing entryways into the town. **Note:** This is a restatement of Goal J.5 in Community Design and is restated as it is critical to attracting people into Buckhannon.

Recommended Time Frame: 2011

Rationale/Comments: It is important that the first impression of the traveler, as well as the residents, has of Buckhannon is one of an historic, charming and unique town, one that they would gladly revisit and encourage their friends to revisit. Consequently, it is important that the entranceways to Buckhannon be aesthetically pleasing.

Goal N.8: Develop access to and promote the use of the Buckhannon Watershed for canoeing and kayaking.

Recommended Time Frame: 2010

Rationale/Comments: Note: This activity could be included in a larger Buckhannon/Upshur Outdoor Recreation tourism program.

Goal N.9: As part of its tourism initiative, Buckhannon/Upshur has built strong support for the arts and has become a well-known center for local artists and artisans. **Note:** This

goal supports not only tourism but also the economic development category. See goal I.2 and objective I.2.1 as this goal supports that economic development initiative.

Recommended Time Frame: Fall 2010

Rationale/Comments: This is an initiative that can use utilize the resources of Create West Virginia. The goal is to capture the potential of local creative talent and to attract new talent by providing them opportunities to showcase their creativity. This will involve creating affordable places to work and sell in the downtown. This is an initiative that can use also the resources and talent of WVWC to promote workshops and events related to the arts, writers and musicians, and to create venues for artists and artisan retreats.

O. Natural Resources and Conservation

We abuse land because we regard it as a commodity belonging to us. When we see land as a community to which we belong, we may begin to use it with love and respect.
Aldo Leopold

Natural resources and conservation are two optional State-mandated categories which have been included, but combined in the Buckhannon 2015 Plan because they both address important programs to conserve and protect our natural resources, including wildlife, natural habitats, sensitive natural areas and green spaces. These topics are important to Buckhannon/Upshur residents as they rated the area's "natural beauty, scenery and rural setting" as the No. 4 strength of the local area. Protection of open space, scenic vistas and important natural resources for futures B/U generations is one of the key tenets of the Buckhannon 2015 future description. The loss of mature trees, natural drainage ways, alteration of existing topography and failure to protect the Buckhannon Watershed can lead to increased flooding, increased river and stream sedimentation, loss of native plant and animal species, and devaluation of property. The city and county must try to balance the competing interests of land and natural resource preservation, community design and economic development. The following goals are aimed at:

- Fostering policies and practices that promote development within and near the city and in the Buckhannon Watershed that are compatible with, complement and enhance the watershed and view shed (scenic vistas), and will not compromise our irreplaceable environmental and scenic resources.
- Reclaiming areas that already have been compromised;
- Reducing consumption of resources; and
- Fostering a greater awareness and community action to protect the natural beauty of the Buckhannon/Upshur community.

Overarching Natural Resources and Conservation Goal:

The Buckhannon/Upshur community has successfully protected, preserved and conserved the area's natural resources sustaining its natural beauty and rural setting for future generations.

Goal O.1: Become a united, ongoing “green community” by Summer 2011.

Recommended Time Frame: Summer 2011

Rationale/Comments: One of the Citizens’ Advisory Committee (working groups) made “becoming a green community” one of its top goals in the conservation area. The belief is that working together across the city and county, Buckhannon/Upshur can implement numerous conservation and natural resource protection initiatives that it can become a model green community.

Objective O.1.1: Create a “green commission” by September 2009. The green commission make-up should be representative of the community at large.

Recommended Time Frame: September 2009

Rationale/Comments: The CAC working group felt that such an initiative must be led by a group of government officials, business and industry representatives and concerned citizens that represent the majority of the community’s residents. Without a community-wide leadership, an effective green initiative cannot developed and implemented.

Objective O.1.2: By May 2010, the green commission will have created and begun to implement a comprehensive plan to accomplish goal N.1.

Recommended Time Frame: May 2010

Rationale/Comments: The CAC recommended for starters, the following potential elements be included in the plan:

- Expand recycling locations to more business sites
- Expanded county sponsored “green days” where county residents could recycle tires, batteries, computers, paint and other hazardous materials
- Establishment of a county-wide aluminum can collection program with proceeds going to youth programs
- Ongoing education on the ways to conserve and protect natural resources
- Enforcement and penalties for those who do not protect the environment and the communities green programs
- Enlistment of WVWC, local churches, local organizations, etc. to promote and lead efforts to become a green community
- Periodic recognition of green activities and accomplishments
- Strong support from local media in promoting the green initiative

Goal O.2: By 2015, the Buckhannon/Upshur community will have successfully preserved the area’s natural open space resources, environmentally sensitive areas and the unique flora and fauna in the local community. This goal contributes to the larger goal of protecting the scenery and the character of the Buckhannon/Upshur Community.

Recommended Time Frame: 2015

Rationale/Comments: This goal and its rationale are self explanatory.

Accomplishment of the goal will require responsive, active stewardship, without which Buckhannon 2015 will be a failure. City and county residents expect and desire that the natural beauty of the local area is sustained for future generations. They expect city and county officials to ensure this goal is realized.

Objective O.2.1: By Fall 2009, establish a natural resources advisory board to develop, implement and oversee the protection of natural resources throughout the B/U community including preserving scenic vistas and roads that are important to the character of our community.

Recommended Time Frame: Fall 2009

Rationale/Comments: Responsible natural resource stewardship requires an aggressive, cohesive community-wide partnership dedicated to the preservation of our natural beauty and the natural assets that make up that beauty. The Buckhannon 2015 plan recommends the establishment of a natural resources advisory board, comprised of key city and county government officials, industry stakeholders, and representatives from the community at large to develop and oversee the implementation of a natural resources preservation and enhancement program.

Objective O.2.2: By Spring 2010, the natural resources advisory board will have created and begun to implement a comprehensive natural resources preservation plan to accomplish goal O.2.

Recommended Time Frame: Spring 2010

Rationale/Comments: The Citizens Advisory Committee recommended the following potential elements of the plan:

- Develop an inventory of all open/green areas, environmentally sensitive areas, and flora and fauna that should be protected and preserved.
- Develop and implement an open/green space acquisition and development program for park or special use.
- Foster new land-use development and zoning guidelines that will ensure that the overall O.2 goal is accomplished
- Develop and implement a plan that preserves the mix of desired timber for the region, which in turn preserves the natural character of the area and ensures a quality product is grown for the market. (This goal is aimed at avoiding improper timber practices that spoil the area's natural environment, both the scenery and the watershed).
- Develop and implement a program that assists land owners with implementing timber management practices that best protect our natural environment and assists them in growing a quality product.

Goal O.3: By Winter 2012, the Buckhannon Watershed is fully protected and has the mechanisms in place to ensure the community's water supply and the watershed will remain protected for the future. Note: This goal complements goal O.2.

Recommended Time Frame: Winter 2012

Rationale/Comments: The Buckhannon Watershed, rural agricultural land and the wooded rolling hills and mountains comprise the valuable natural resource assets of the Buckhannon/Upshur community. Goal N.2 is aimed at the protecting the rural and wooded terrain of the community. This goal N.2 is aimed at protecting the valuable watershed that sustains the terrain, city and county residents, and its businesses and public facilities. Without ongoing strong stewardship of the watershed, the Buckhannon/Upshur community could be unnecessarily jeopardized. Accomplishment of this goal will ensure the viability of the watershed for generations to come.

Objective O.3.1: By Fall 2009, establish a City-County Buckhannon Watershed Steering Committee to lead the efforts to accomplish goal O.3, i.e., to direct and or oversee all actions to accomplish this goal and its objectives.

Recommended Time Frame: Fall 2009

Rationale/Comments: The Citizens' Advisory Committee (CAC) strongly recommended that the protection of the watershed be included in the Buckhannon 2015 Plan. They envisioned a city/county-wide partnership comprised of key stakeholders (Buckhannon Watershed Authority, Farm Bureau, city engineers, county officials, industry representation and B/U representation) working together to proactively protect the valuable Buckhannon Watershed. The CAC recognizes that individual organizations and people work diligently to preserve the watershed. However, the CAC believes that a larger, unified task force is needed to act as a steering committee to ensure the maximum amount of effort can be taken to preserve, protect and where needed reclaim this most valuable community natural resource.

Objective O.3.2: By Spring 2010, the Buckhannon Watershed Steering Committee will have created and begun to implement a comprehensive Buckhannon Watershed Preservation Plan to accomplish goal O.3.

Recommended Time Frame: Spring 2010

Rationale/Comments: The Citizens Advisory Committee recommended the following potential elements of the plan:

- Developed an inventory of actions needed for improving the Buckhannon River's flow by identifying trees, sediment, improper septic and drainage sites, etc. that must be removed/corrected to improve and secure the river's water capacity and quality.
- Development of a plan for embankment fortification of the Buckhannon River to include ensuring brush and trees on the banks are not removed and by adding native trees and shrubs where needed.
- Complete development and implementation of a storm drainage improvement program that separates storm drainage from the sanitary sewer system.

- Complete development and implementation of a septic system improvement program for those systems within the watershed that require correction, for example installing cluster collection systems where appropriate.
- Initiate a farmer education program aimed at reducing agricultural runoff. Program could include evaluating current agricultural runoff practices, education of best agricultural management practices to preclude runoff, and education of federal and state programs to assist farmers with this issue.
- Work with the city and county to promulgate land use planning and guidelines to ensure the watershed remains protected.
- Complete an inventory of all other possible negative impacts on the watershed and develop a plan to rectify identified problem areas by winter, 2012 (goal O.3's overall target date).
-

P. Community – West Virginia Wesleyan College Relations

Buckhannon is a town with a college, not a college town.

Local WVWC resident comment

Because WVWC plays such a large role in the life of the Buckhannon/Upshur community, a separate category is devoted to this important community institution. For more than a century, Wesleyan has been one of the cornerstones in the foundation of the local community. It has gained national recognition for its academic excellence and the success of its graduates. More than 15,000 people have become alumni over that century, and in Upshur County alone, more than 900 alumni reside.

With an annual budget approaching \$25 million, Wesleyan is major contributor to the health of the local economy. A West Virginia University 2004 study revealed that Wesleyan's economic impact upon Upshur and surrounding counties is \$55 million annually. Other significant Wesleyan facts are:

- Enrollment of 1,400 undergraduate and 200 graduates is expected within the next five years.
- The faculty currently totals 252 full-time and 106 part-time faculty members and employees.
- The college offers 43 undergraduate majors and five graduate programs.
- 188 of the current students are from the Buckhannon/Upshur community.

In addition to curricula improvements, through outstanding leadership, Wesleyan is making dramatic changes to its campus and infrastructure - visible, exciting growth for the college and the community.

- A new \$7.2 million Virginia Thomas Law Center for the Performing Arts will open in April 2009.
- An \$8 million David Reemsnyder Research Center is expected to be completed by the opening of the 2009-2010 school year.
- Fleming Residence Hall is currently undergoing a \$5 million renovation.

- A new facilities master plan will guide further renovation or development of residence halls, office, classroom, and other facilities.

So intimately intertwined is Wesleyan with the community that their importance to each other and the critical need for each to grow in tandem cannot be overstated. Wesleyan and community leaders must find new ways to support one another and to collaborate on each other's future.

Overarching West Virginia Wesleyan College – Community Relations Goal

*Through new and ongoing collaborative WVWC-local community relations
“Buckhannon becomes a great college town.”*

Goal P.1: WVWC, city and county leaders establish a WVWC-Community Steering Committee, which meets quarterly, to promote the college-community relations and each other's mutually interdependent interests. Initial issues to consider:

- How can the city make students feel welcomed and a part of the community?
- What can Wesleyan do to make visitors and local residents more welcomed on campus?
- What can be done to improve police–student relations on and off campus?
- What role can the city and county play in promoting Wesleyan as a high-quality educational institution?
- What Buckhannon 2015 initiatives can Wesleyan and the community work collaboratively for the good of the Buckhannon/Upshur community.
- How can the city, county, college, chamber of commerce, Rotary, and other organizations work more effectively and efficiently to promote local events and activities.

Recommended Time Frame: As soon as possible

Rationale/Comments: The rationale was explained in the opening paragraph above. The steering committee can take many forms:

- It could include Wesleyan and city and county government leaders only, or it could be expanded to include college students and local residents.
- It could include representation of college staff and students and local business, professional and government leaders/citizens as appointed by Wesleyan and government leaders.

Goal P.2: The city and county have successfully initiated an ongoing WVWC-Buckhannon/Upshur Community enhancement program.

Recommended Timeframe: As soon as possible

Rationale/Comments: This goal promotes proactive actions on the part of the city and county to support and enhance one of the community's most important institutions. The city has begun this effort with installation of new street signs on College Avenue that will add to the beauty of that street and the campus. The city and county can undertake considerable actions/activity to help make Buckhannon a great college town. This goal is aimed at action to bring that about.

Goal P.3: WVWC has successfully initiated its own WVWC-Buckhannon/Upshur Community enhancement program. This program could include:

- Expanding classes and programs aimed at the entire community, including retired and senior citizens.
- Utilization of the new performing arts center for a variety of cultural events that are also made available to local residents.
- Initiate public lectures, debates and discussions that are open to the community.
- Take the lead on Buckhannon 2015 initiatives, e.g., helping the community to become "green."

Recommended Time Frame: 2009-2010 School Year

Rationale/Comments: Self explanatory

V. VALIDATION, IMPLEMENTATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A vision without a plan is just a dream. A plan without a vision is just drudgery. But a vision with a plan can change the world.

Author unknown

Validation

During the first week of February 2009, the initial draft report was mailed to the CAC members and also provided to city and county officials. Based on feedback from CAC members and city staff, a revised version 2.1 was published on March 24, 2009. In addition, an “issues working document” was prepared which listed 24 issues that surfaced during the feedback process.

On April 4, 2009, a third CAC meeting was held. The purpose of the meeting was to review the issues working document and validate the plan. The issues document, which is posted on the city website, listed each issue along with proposed action on the issue. Attendees were asked to agree or disagree with the proposed actions and to provide comments. Attendees (90%) strongly agreed with the proposed actions, and supported their agreement with positive written comments. The results of this exercise are available online or at city hall (contact Rich Clemens). It is important to note there were five substantive issues that surfaced during the review process and are discussed below. The conclusions from the CAC meeting are also provided below.

- Two city council members and the police chief did not support the findings and recommendations regarding policing. 90% (18 of 20) of respondents agreed that the policing issue should be kept in the report. Rather than rely on the CAC attendees feedback completely, the working group decided to further investigate the issue and met with (1) college officials in a group and individually, (2) Greek groups, and (3) several students. The working group also talked with alumni and parents of Wesleyan students. The bottom line is the working group validated that an issue exists and have shared the concerns and resolution ideas with the police chief, who has already initiated action to improve policing professionalism in the college community.
- Two council members indicated that issues dealing with the CVB be removed and that recommending that the CVB become certified is not appropriate. Again 90% of respondents agreed (2 had no opinion) that the CVB issue does have relevance to the community and agreed that the goal should be changed to deal with the make up of the board. See goal N.1 for the new goal.
- One council member took issue with wording of “abandoned buildings, slum-like areas, ugly empty downtown shops...” Again 90% of the respondents agreed that the language as written in the plan should be retained and believe there are deteriorated buildings that need to be improved, beautified or demolished. However, the working group decided to remove the term slum.
- One council member took issue with the comments regarding “a city divided” and “lack of cooperation between the city and county.” Again 90% of the respondents

agreed that the language as written in the plan should be retained and believe there is an issue that must be resolved. It should be noted that this issue surfaced in the first CAC meeting in February 2008 when it was identified as the number one threat to the Buckhannon 2015 plan. Many elected city and county officials attended this initial CAC session. This threat surfaced many times during the 18-month planning period and in the eyes of many looms large today. The working group kept this issue in the report as the *Handbook* says the community must deal with the good and the bad.

- One council member was concerned that the plan did not meet state code and that because it includes sections that fall outside of the city's jurisdiction she could not support the plan. Again 90% of the respondents agreed that the plan as written should be retained. During the first CAC meeting, participants felt that the working group should look at the larger Buckhannon/Upshur community. The first session included several city and government officials. Based on the strong opinion of the participants and *The Small Town Planning Handbook* guidance, the working group proceeded with the larger Buckhannon/Upshur perspective. It has been known from the inception that this is the approach and CAC members have communicated their desire to keep the plan a "community plan." Regarding meeting the requirements for a plan to be submitted to the state, there is still much work to do such as developing a future land use map and conducting transportation and housing studies. Once those items are complete, appropriate sections can be taken from this plan and added to the results of the "to be completed work" in order to meet the state requirement. In the meantime, the community including city council should be committed to working on the goals and aspirations of its citizens.

During the second part of the April 4th CAC meeting participants prioritized the goals into high, medium or low priority. The results of this exercise are as follows:

High Priority Goals (The priority score is shown for each goal: the higher the score, the higher the priority. 3.0 is the highest possible score.) These are the goals that the CAC believes should be addressed first and are subsequently the high priority goals.

- B.1 Develop a future Buckhannon/Upshur land use map **3.0**
- B.2 The city hires a fully qualified planner **3.0**
- D.2 Conduct a comprehensive transportation study of the local transportation network **3.0**
- A.1 The city and county begin to establish new partnerships to pursue accomplishment of the "shared goals" in the 2015 plan **2.9**
- C.2 Conduct a housing demand study to determine projected future housing requirements for the next 10-15 years **2.89**
- P.1 WVWC, city and county leaders establish a WVWC-community steering committee, which meets quarterly to promote college-community relations **2.8**

- A.2 Buckhannon/Upshur has fostered transparent and collaborative local governments that have brought people and groups together to work collaboratively to accomplish the Buckhannon 2015 goals and objectives **2.7**
- D.1 As the downtown area is developed, it will be complemented by significantly improved traffic flow & parking **2.65**
- D.3 Develop a truck route around Buckhannon **2.65**
- I.2 By Dec 2010, Buckhannon/Upshur has established a well earned reputation as an “entrepreneur friendly community” through a program called “Create Buckhannon/Upshur.” **2.65**
- N.5 Create & begin to execute a marketing strategy to accomplish the tourism goals **2.65**
- N.7 The city has created distinctive new entries by upgrading the city’s gateways so that Buckhannon has aesthetically pleasing entryways into the town **2.65**
- G.2 Through implementation of zoning guidelines in goal B.3, the city and county have successfully controlled development within a 3-mile distance east and west of Route 20 along Corridor H **2.61**
- N.1 The Buckhannon CVB’s board of directors has greatly expanded its membership to 12 to 15 members with the majority of its members directly involved in tourism and minimal participation from elected officials **2.6**
- E.1 The city’s capital improvement program includes an aggressive street upgrade and maintenance program to improve the condition and maintenance of city streets **2.58**
- K.3 As part of the Corridor H District Master Plan, the land use plan portion clearly designates preferred development sites that will foster the community’s character and prevent uncontrolled, ugly sprawl **2.55**
- L.1 By 2015, the city has executed a well-developed abandoned building demolition program **2.55**
- E.3c Continue to aggressively assert control over the drainage systems within the city in order to avoid compromising their effectiveness and to prevent hazard to individual properties **2.53**
- F.1 The city’s police force maintains & improves community livability by working with all citizens to preserve life, maintain human rights, protect property and promote individual responsibility and community commitment **2.5**
- I.3 Develop future retail/commercial areas in a high quality manner to complement Buckhannon’s “small town” atmosphere **2.5**

- J.2 City has established community design standards and guidelines that promote and protect the community's character and that are considered for every project **2.5**
- J.3 The city has developed and approved district master plans for the city's various districts **2.5**
- E.5 To continue to provide sufficient water, sewer and solid waste disposal services to the community now and in the future, the city provides the requisite O&M funds in its annual budgets and ensures the city workforce remains stable **2.5**

Medium Priority Goals Medium priority goals are considered to be important elements of the overall plan. From the CAC perspective, these goals should be pursued as soon as the higher priority goals are accomplished.

- J.1 City has expanded the existing zoning plan review process to include a building plan review process **2.47**
- J.5 Strengthen/beautify community gateways especially long Corridor H using signage, landscaping and open green space, period lighting, etc. **2.47**
- P.2 The city and county have successively initiated an ongoing WWC-Buckhannon/Upshur community enhancement program **2.47**
- H.1 By Spring 2013, the city and county will open Buckhannon/Upshur recreation center that provides year-round recreational, social and educational activities for all ages **2.42**
- B.3 To ensure Corridor H develops in a desired manner, develop and implement zoning guidelines along the Corridor **2.4**
- F.5 The city and county has a full-time grant writer **2.4**
- P.3 WWC has successfully initiated its own WWC-Buckhannon/Upshur community enhancement program **2.4**
- E.2 The city implements a timely sidewalk repair and maintenance program throughout the city **2.37**
- E.4c Undertake upgrade, maintenance, and improvement projects required to maintain the performance of the treatment plant and pump stations and to satisfy regulatory requirements **2.37**
- N.9 As part of its tourism initiative, Buckhannon/Upshur has built strong support for the arts and has become a well-known center for local artists and artisans **2.37**
- O.2 By 2015, B/U community will have successfully preserved the area's open space resources, environmentally sensitive areas and unique flora & fauna in the local community **2.37**
- N.2 The city and county creates an executive steering committee to lead and oversee the development of a major tourism initiative for the community **2.37**

- N.3 Create a “brand name” for the Buckhannon/Upshur area as a destination location that can be used to market the area for tourism **2.37**
- C.4 Upgrade and implement all local laws and zoning ordinances as they relate to non-rental housing properties and housing subdivisions **2.37**
- D.4 Create a quality “pedestrian friendly network” throughout the city by providing safe sidewalks, crosswalks, and a well designed system of walk and bike trails **2.35**
- E.6 Enhance potential economic and residential growth in the community by encouraging and supporting the expansion of affordable Internet high-speed network access within at least a seven-mile radius of the courthouse **2.35**
- I.1 The city has hired a downtown/Main Street coordinator to lead retail business development planning and to serve as a small business advocate to assist small businesses within the city **2.35**
- I.4 To facilitate attracting new businesses, establish “digital” infrastructure in the desired commercial and office locations as specified in the approved land use map **2.35**
- J.4 As a first step in improving the beauty of the surrounding community, plant native shade trees and shrubs throughout the city **2.35**
- L.3 The city promotes the development of a Good Neighbor Program whereby a citizens’ volunteer maintenance force is created to assist aged and low-income families in maintaining their exterior properties **2.35**
- E.4d Proactively address discharge requirements into the Buckhannon river which could impact on the opportunity for continues growth **2.33**
- N.6 Buckhannon/Upshur has created a sustainable tourism trade and is well known in the state and the region as a fun tourism destination spot **2.33**
- F.4 The city and the county works with the board of education to promote education excellence across the county school system **2.32**
- I.5 The city and county has successfully implemented a trade skills development program which has increased high school students opportunities to develop trade skills that are readily marketable to the Buckhannon/Upshur industry base **2.3**
- G.1 In 2015, city and county leaders have exhibited a long history of working closely with one another to sustain the local area’s natural beauty, scenery, and rural setting **2.28**
- D.6 The airport has extended its runway to a length of 5,200 feet with parallel runways in place **2.26**
- K.1 Proposed development and redevelopment conforms to land use designations and are appropriate for the district in which they are planned **2.25**

- N.4 Create the tourism brand master plan that lays out the vision and the tourism goals **2.25**
- O.3 By Winter 2012, the Buckhannon watershed is fully protected and has the mechanisms in place to ensure the community's water supply and the watershed will remain protected for the future **2.25**

Low Priority Goals The following goals are considered to be lower in priority and should be tabled for later consideration after high and medium priority goals are completed.

- E.3b Continue to construct storm sewers and to implement other improvements to the drainage system **2.21**
- K.2 As part of the district development plan effort proposed in J.3, existing or abandoned sites within each district are evaluated for infill development **2.21**
- F.2 The city performs a comprehensive study of the fire department and emergency services department and develops a plan to address the shortcomings in a timely manner **2.2**
- M.1 The city has established historic preservation district overlay zones to be incorporated into the zoning and building plan review process **2.2**
- E.3a Develop a comprehensive plan for storm drainage within the city **2.16**
- E.4a Continue to upgrade existing sewers in order to remove extraneous flow with the goal of improving collection sewer performance and plant performance **2.16**
- H.2 By summer 2013, the city has completed its planned community-wide walk and bike trail system **2.15**
- I.6 Buckhannon/Upshur has successfully promoted itself as an attractive retirement community **2.15**
- L.2 The city has implemented a monthly exterior property inspection program to ensure that home owners and business owner properties are maintained according to city code **2.15**
- H.5 By Jan 1, 2015, the city has established a recreation and amusement park on the land that may be vacated by the Split Rail Company **2.11**
- C.3 Provide an ongoing system of inspections and rankings of rental properties within the city **2.05**
- C.5 The Buckhannon/Upshur area offers a wide variety of sound, healthy and affordable housing choices for current and future residents **2.05**
- L.4 By 2015, through close cooperation between the city and county, Route 20 from Corridor H to the high school has been established as a community pride route by

improving the road's visual identity consistent with goals in the Buckhannon 2015 plan **2.05**

- M.2 City planning commission to establish a historic preservation program that will encourage property owners to preserve their historic structures **2.05**
- O.1 Become a united, ongoing “green community” by summer 2011 **2.05**
- E.8 The relocation of the power substation currently located near the entrance to the city of Buckhannon and along Route 20 just north of Buckhannon Crossroads **2.0**
- F.3 The senior center develops and implements a 5-year plan to address senior needs in the community **1.95**
- H.3 By summer 2013, the city has upgraded the walk/bike trail system with exercise stations, benches, bike racks, and appropriate signage that complements and enhances the walk/bike trail system **1.95**
- N.8 Develop access and promote the use of the Buckhannon watershed for canoeing and kayaking **1.95**
- E.4b Extend and upgrade the collection system in order to serve new customers and support development **1.94**
- C.1 Conduct a housing survey to determine the total number and quality of dwelling units in the Buckhannon/Upshur community **1.84**
- E.7 Eliminate all existing overhead distribution systems and transmission lines of electrical and communication utilities, excluding transmission lines of 15,000 volts or more as soon as possible and such distributed lines and systems be placed underground **1.79**
- H.4 By June 1, 2015, the “Heart of West Virginia” walk and bike trail is completed connecting Weston-Buckhannon-Elkins-Philippi-Buckhannon **1.78**
- D.5 Encourage expansion of public transportation for the Buckhannon/Upshur community **1.75**

The last activity of the April 4 CAC meeting, CAC members were asked to rank the top set of goals. The following lists the CAC's top 15 goals.

1. Goal B.2: The city hires a fully qualified city planner. Note: It would be ideal to have the city planner in place to lead the accomplishment of the B.1 Goal, development of a future land use map.
2. Goal N.1: The Buckhannon Convention and Visitors Bureau's board of directors has greatly expanded its membership to 12 to 15 members with the majority of its members directly involved in tourism (motel/hotel general managers, restaurant owners, fairs, and festivals representation, Main Street organization representation, retail antique and gift shop owners, and local destination venue representation) and minimal participation from elected officials (no more than one from each municipality and one from the county).
3. Goal F.5: The city and county fund a full-time grant writer.

4. Goal G.2: Through implementation of the zoning guidelines in goal B.3, the city and county have successfully controlled development within a three-mile distance east and west of Route 20 along Corridor H.
5. Goal I.5: The city and county has successfully implemented a trade skills development program which has increased high school students opportunities to develop trade skills that are readily marketable to the Buckhannon/Upshur industry base, especially the coal, oil, gas, and wind industries.
6. Goal B.1: In order to enhance land uses and manage and guide future development, a future Buckhannon/Upshur land use map is developed for the city and “ten” miles surrounding the city.
7. Goal H. 5: By January 1, 2015, the city has established a recreation and amusement park on the land that may be vacated by the Split Rail Company. The vacated area is suited for a number of outdoor entertainment and recreational purposes.
8. Goal P.1: WVWC, city and county leaders establish a WVWC-community steering committee, which meets quarterly, to promote the college-community relations and each other’s mutually interdependent interests.
9. Goal A.1: The city and county begin to establish new partnerships to pursue accomplishments of the “shared goals” identified in this Buckhannon 2015 plan.
10. Goal D.3: Develop a truck route around Buckhannon. Note: This item has been separated from the transportation study as the need for truck traffic relief through the city has been solidly identified in the Buckhannon 2015 planning process.
11. Goal J.2: City has established community design standards and guidelines that promote and protect the community’s character and that are considered for every project.
12. Goal D.1: As the downtown area is developed, it will be complemented by significantly improved downtown traffic flow and parking.
13. Goal E.6: Enhance potential economic and residential growth in the community by encouraging and supporting the expansion of affordable Internet high-speed network access within at least a seven mile radius of the courthouse.
14. Goal F.1: The city’s police force maintains and improves community livability by working with all citizens to preserve life, maintain human rights, protect property and promote individual responsibility and community commitment.
15. Goal F.4: The city and county works with the board of education to promote education excellence across the county school system.

Endorsements

To validate the plan from an external viewpoint, the document was provided to a professional city planner and a WV State community development expert. Jay Rogers, director of planning and development for the city of Fairmont reviewed the plan and complimented the working group for developing an excellent comprehensive plan, which he believes far exceeds what most WV cities have developed for their communities. Jeff James, chairperson of Create West Virginia, reviewed the plan and remarked that “Buckhannon is light years ahead of other state communities.”

On April 29, 2009, the Upshur County Development Authority endorsed the plan and commented in their endorsement letter:

- “The work involved in compiling this plan is of an excellent quality and a great step forward in developing a vision by and for the community of Buckhannon and Upshur County. Of particular note is the input gathered from so many county/city

residents as well as business & local government leaders. We encourage its adoption by the city council of Buckhannon and its implementation over the month's and years ahead."

Similarly, WVWC has strongly endorsed the plan and offers its full commitment to the city and county to make Buckhannon 2015 a reality. Copies of all endorsement letters can be obtained from Rich Clemens at city hall.

Implementation

Insanity is doing the same thing over and over again, and expecting a different result.

Author unknown

The Buckhannon 2015 document is an instrument that the city and county can utilize to plan for and guide the growth of the community development over the next five to ten years. This comprehensive plan is considered to be a flexible guide to decision making rather than an inflexible blueprint for change and development. The plan presents many goals for the community which are considered reasonable, feasible, and extremely important to the citizens of the Buckhannon Upshur community.

The real value of the Buckhannon 2015 comprehensive plan will be measured in terms of the degree of success which the Buckhannon/Upshur community achieves in accomplishing the goals that were identified by its citizenry. Key elements that must be in place for success to have a chance are:

- Unrelenting positive leadership that champions the implementation process and creates an environment for success. The requisite leadership can come from elected officials as well as other community leaders
- Active, visible leadership that empowers community involvement and promotes inclusiveness and teamwork
- A strong coalition of community people dedicated to making Buckhannon 2015 a reality
- Everyone working in "good faith" towards common objectives
- Effective communications, i.e., openly communicating daily, weekly, monthly
- Focusing on desired results, using public milestones to measure progress
- Proactive removing barriers to progress, and dealing with resistance head on
- Have fun, celebrate wins and progress

The first step in implementation is for elected officials is to accept the plan which describes their constituents' aspirations for community development and the community's future character and quality of life. Throughout most of the planning process, government officials and community residents have been strong proponents of the planning effort. In the latter stage, a few have questioned certain aspects of the plan. However, issues have been validated and adjustments to the plan were made where warranted.

Rather than trying to find fault with specific issues that ultimately delays implementation, city council and county government should accept the plan as a good faith effort of its citizens to provide a blueprint for progress. As specific issues are worked for implementation, adjustment to the specificity of goals and objectives can be made.

If this first step (acceptance) can be achieved, initiation of plan implementation has a chance. Assuming acceptance, then the next step is to determine how to move forward. The working group proposes the following implementation approaches.

City Council Implementation:

First, city council reviews the high and medium priority goals and selects the low hanging fruit, i.e., those goals that do not require the expenditure of funds. For example:

- Goal P.1 - WVWC, city, and county leaders establish a Wesleyan-Buckhannon community steering committee: Reach out to the county commissioners and Wesleyan president and put this body in place soonest.
- Goal F.1 - The city's police force maintains and improves livability by working with all citizens... Support the police chief in implementing the objectives identified under this goal.
- Goal A.1 - The city and county establish new partnerships to pursue accomplishment of the "shared goals." See City-County Implementation section below.

Second, assign the planning commission the task to develop a proposal to present to city council for the hiring of a city planner (Goal B.2, which is a high priority goal and was ranked as the number one goal). As a minimum, the proposal should include the job description, the salary recommendation and potential funding for the position. One critical job task for this position should be that of a grant writer. The working group believes that this position is critical for the overall success on the Buckhannon 2015 implementation effort. Upon hiring, the city planner should be assigned the responsibility to:

- Develop a future Buckhannon/Upshur land use map (Goal B.1)
- Lead the comprehensive study of the local transportation network (Goal D.2)
- Lead the housing demand study (Goal C.2)
- Complete development of the Buckhannon city comprehensive plan that must be submitted to the State by 2014.

Additional goals that should fall under the purview of the city planner include:

- City has established community design standards and guidelines (Goal J.2)
- The city has developed and approved master plans for the city's districts (Goal J.3)

Third, determine a strategy to pursue the other high and medium priority goals. One strategy would be to attack "a select number" of goals to pursue and assign them to individuals and/or groups. Using this approach, city council would review the high

priority goals and select a number to pursue over the next twelve months. Upon completion of a goal, commission a group to work another goal on the high priority list, and so on. Another and more preferred approach would be to pursue goals that would once accomplished would overcome the community's dislikes/weaknesses. For example:

- Dislike #1: Lack of retail diversity.
 - Goal I.1 - The city has hired a downtown/Main Street coordinator to lead retail business development planning & to serve as a small business advocate to assist small businesses within the city. A downtown business coordinator working in tandem with the economic development authority would be a powerful force to attract new retail and new dining facilities to the community. Initial effort should be on attracting a shoe store and clothing store.
 - Goal I.2 - By 2010, Buckhannon has established a well earned reputation as an entrepreneur friendly community through a program called "Create Buckhannon/Upshur." Accomplishment of this goal would provide a greatly improved environment to attract retail and dining facilities.
- Dislike #2: "Nothing to do" – lack of activities for youth and families, lack of recreational activities and a lack of cultural activities. This is a major area where the city council along with the county's cooperation could greatly improve the livability of the community.
 - Goal J.5 - By spring 2013, the city and county will open a Buckhannon/Upshur Recreation Center that provides year-round activities for all ages.
 - Goal H.2 - By summer 2013, the city has completed its planned community-wide walk & bike trail.
 - Goal H.5 - By 2015, the city has established a recreation and amusement park on the land that may be vacated by the Split Rail Company.
- Dislike #3: Lack of restaurants and dining facilities. Goals under Dislike #1 apply here.
- Dislike #4a: Lack of Jobs
 - Goal I.2 - By 2010, Buckhannon has established a well earned reputation as an entrepreneur friendly community through a program called "Create Buckhannon/Upshur." Accomplishment of this goal ultimately leads to new jobs in the community.
 - Goal E.6 - Enhance potential economic & residential growth by encouraging & supporting the expansion of affordable Internet high-speed network access. Completion of this goal and I.4 below provides the requisite infrastructure to attract "new economy" jobs.
 - Goal I.1 - Hiring of the downtown coordinator to serve as a small business (i.e., employers) advocate.
 - Goal I.4 - To facilitate attracting new businesses, establish "digital" infrastructure in the desired commercial and office locations.
- Dislike #4b: Concerns about city and county government
 - See the City-County Implementation section

- Similar listing of goals to address dislikes #6 through #10 could be developed. Also, goals can be differentiated to support maintaining the “likes” or strengths of the community.

City-County Implementation:

As this is a community-wide plan, successful accomplishment of many of the plan’s goals will be dependent upon the level of cooperation between the local community governing bodies. Competition between the two entities and a perceived lack of requisite cooperation were viewed as the biggest threat to the comprehensive plan. Community residents desire to see a strong commitment to the plan’s goals and a high level of collaboration and teamwork between city and county officials to make the plan a success.

Many counties and cities have successfully developed intergovernmental contracts to coordinate their collaborative comprehensive planning and implementation efforts. For example, Teton county and Jackson, Wyoming meet six times per year to discuss their planning and implementation issues; and once a year, they review the effectiveness and adequacy of their plan. The town of Spring Green and Sauk county, Wisconsin governmental entities have entered into similar collaborative arrangements to pursue their comprehensive plan’s goals and objectives. For Buckhannon 2015 to be successful, Buckhannon’s city council and Upshur county commission should follow these examples.

There are numerous goals in the plan that require close cooperation and teamwork between the governing organizations. The high priority goals are as follows:

- Goal A.1 – The city and county establish new partnerships to pursue accomplishment of the “shared goals.”
- Goal P.1 - WVWC, city, and county leaders establish a Wesleyan-Buckhannon community steering committee.
- Goal A.2 - Buckhannon/Upshur has fostered transparent and collaborative local governments that have brought people and groups together to work collaboratively. See Community Implementation section below.
- Goal I.2 - By 2010, Buckhannon has established a well earned reputation as an entrepreneur friendly community through a program called “Create Buckhannon/Upshur.”
- Goal G.2 – Through implementation of zoning guidelines in Goal B.3, the city & county have successfully controlled development within a 3-mile distance east and west Route 20 along Corridor H.
- There are several “shared” goals that fall into the medium level goals such as “By spring 2013, the city and county will open a Buckhannon/Upshur recreation center that provides year-round activities for all ages (Goal J.5).” The area’s second biggest weakness or dislike identified by Buckhannon/Upshur residents is the “nothing to do” issue. Resolution of this issue would be an excellent project for the city and county to collectively pursue.

Community Implementation:

The Buckhannon 2015 comprehensive plan is a reflection of the community's values, aspirations and shared vision of a future and desired Buckhannon. Just as the plan was developed based on citizen input, active community participation is vital to the plan's successful implementation. ***While Buckhannon/Upshur's governmental entities must play a strong leadership role, the plan's implementation must call upon private organizations, local businesses and industry, neighborhood and civic organizations, and citizens of all ages to coordinate their efforts with a shared sense of direction and a renewed spirit of partnership.***

How does a community come together to take on an initiative such as this? First and foremost, it begins with a strong commitment of local citizens to get it started. Back in the mid-to-late 1980's, a Buckhannon/Upshur group of citizens led by the chamber of commerce came together to tackle significant issues facing the community at that time. That group was known as the "Togetherness Group," which came together to work issues such as planning and coordinating Corridor H and downtown traffic, development of an industrial park, attracting industrial development, etc. The Togetherness Group oversaw working groups on each of the issues they pursued. So it has been done in Buckhannon and needs to be done again for the plan's implementation to be successful.

Other communities have been successful in bringing diverse groups and individuals together to pursue their plan's goals and objectives. For example, Orange, Virginia created "Leadership Orange," which is a "multi-stakeholder group charged with coordination and advocacy of private sector projects and programs described" in their long range plan. In West Virginia, there is a relatively new initiative called Create West Virginia "whose mission is to empower West Virginians at a local level to place themselves among the most innovative, dynamic, prosperous, creative communities in the world." The working group believes, Buckhannon/Upshur can use the Create WV structure as its model for its community implementation approach.

Create Buckhannon Today in 2009, no community structure exists that can effectively guide the needed action to accomplish all of the plan's goals and objectives. The community has many excellent organizations attending to various facets of community life: BURMA, chamber of commerce, city council, conventions and visitors bureau, county commission, economic development authority, planning commission, and West Virginia Wesleyan College. There are many non-profit organizations that are focused on community life such as the Lions Club, Rotary, and church organizations (Parish House/Crosslines). In several instances, these organizations may be working the same issues but not in a shared approach.

For Buckhannon 2015 to be successful, it is proposed that the community's organizations unite in a new direction, form a common bond to pursue the goals and objectives identified by its community citizenry, and commit its talent, expertise and energy to making the Buckhannon/Upshur community "a great place to live, work and enjoy."

Without collaborative focused action, these organizations will go their separate ways, the entire Buckhannon Upshur community will fall short of its potential, and Buckhannon 2015 will be just another casualty to indifference and community infighting.

We propose a “Create Buckhannon” organization be established to be the community’s arm working in tandem with governmental entities and WVWC to pursue the plan’s goals and objectives. Create Buckhannon should have broad participation from across the community to include, as a minimum, representation from:

Artists community, banking community; board of education; Buckhannon watershed; Buckhannon city planner; Buckhannon zoning officer; BURMA; chamber of commerce; churches, city council; county commission; county schools system; CVB downtown/main street coordinator; economic development authority; energy (coal, gas & oil) industry; legal community; Parish House; parks and recreation; planning commission; Region VII; Rock Cave; Rotary; senior citizens center; St. Joseph’s hospital; transportation and highways; and West Virginia Wesleyan College. In addition, local citizens of all ages including retired city leaders, parents, college students and youth.

The goal of Create Buckhannon is to tap into every element of Buckhannon/Upshur’s deep wealth of talent and strong sense of community volunteerism. The creativity, talent and energy exist within the community to accomplish extraordinary things. We just need the positive leadership and a good faith working environment to make it happen.

Recommendations

Buckhannon/Upshur residents, thank you for all your input in helping us develop the Buckhannon 2015 Plan. We truly hope that the plan will serve as a catalyst for a new spirit of partnership within the community and that we will all be able to work together to make our community a great place to live, work and play!

Richard Clemens, Mark Hays, Debbie Huber, James Huber, Cj Rylands, John Scott, Al Tucker

The Buckhannon 2015 working group recommends the following:

1. City council accepts the plan as the community’s aspirations for the Buckhannon/Upshur area.
2. City council pursues the implementation strategies described in the Implementation Section.
3. County commission accepts the plan as the community’s aspirations for the Buckhannon/Upshur area.
4. City council and county commission pursues the collaborative implementation strategy outlined in the Implementation Section.
5. City council and county commission empowers and supports the implementation of a Create Buckhannon initiative as described in the previous section.
6. As the long range plan should be a living document, the city and county should require annual reviews and revisions of the plan. A major evaluation of the plan

should be scheduled in five-year intervals to identify new or evolving community issues, policy shifts and changed decisions.

APPENDIX

Documents generated from the Buckhannon Planning Effort are available at the Buckhannon City Hall (See Richard Clemens)

- Buckhannon Community Survey
- Buckhannon/Upshur County High School Survey
- West Virginia Wesleyan Survey
- Buckhannon 2015 Community Survey Analysis Report, August 2008
- Buckhannon 2015 Buckhannon Upshur High School Survey Analysis & Findings, August 2008
- Buckhannon 2015 West Virginia Wesleyan College Survey Analysis & Findings, August 2008
- Citizens' Advisory Committee Envision Buckhannon 2015 Meeting Slides, February 9, 2008
- SWOT Analysis from February 2008 CAC Meeting
- Citizens' Advisory Committee Envision Buckhannon 2015 Meeting Slides, September 13, 2008, 2008
- Benchmarking Trip Report, November, 4, 2008
- April 4, 2009 CAC Draft Report Feedback Results
- April 4, 2009 CAC Meeting – Goal Priority Rankings
- April 4, CAC Top 15 Priority Goals