

CHAPTER 12

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Craig County values its unique and irreplaceable status as a rural community with clean air and water, an uncluttered environment, attractive views, clean and safe industry and economic assets, and an excellent quality of life. Our overall goal is to be a county that is environmentally responsible and economically sustainable with a size, density, and diversity that encourages interaction, involvement and vitality among our people. **It is also of the utmost importance that we obtain and develop a balanced harmony between the economic needs and fiscal capabilities of the County.**

Housing

Goal: Craig County desires for its citizens to have opportunities for safe, convenient, and affordable housing, in such a way as to preserve the rural amenities that are the County's hallmark.

Objectives and Recommendations:

1. Housing for the County's large and growing elderly population is a priority. The County should pursue funding for the development of additional facilities for housing the elderly, to include working with private/non-profit organizations in the development of a combination assisted living/nursing home facility. *The County should consider the cost impact of such a facility. These facilities often require additional services and unanticipated costs. Therefore, the option to grant possible tax breaks to such potential facilities should be weighed carefully.*
2. The County should pursue the option of working with developers in creating affordable housing projects.
3. The County should investigate the feasibility of a retirement community built around a golf course.
4. Additional handicapped-accessible rental housing should be developed – possibly through the Blue Ridge Community Housing Agency. *The County should consider the cost impact of such a facility. These facilities often require additional services and unanticipated costs. Therefore, the option to grant possible tax breaks to such potential facilities should be weighed carefully.*
5. The County should encourage residential development along the Route 311 corridor between the Roanoke County line and New Castle, around New Castle and any areas served by public water and sewer.
6. The County should consider allowing private communities well systems in subdivisions that are large enough for the system to be economically feasible and that have soils suitable for individual septic systems. Private community well systems could allow for enhanced aquifer protection by reducing the number of aquifer punctures.
7. The County should encourage high quality mobile home parks in the area near New Castle to discourage the random placement of mobile homes throughout the County.

Economy

Goal: Craig County wishes to promote a healthy and diverse economic base which balances the need for increased economic opportunities with the need to protect and preserve the County's quality of life and environment.

Objectives and Recommendations:

1. The County, working with the Craig County Industrial Development Authority and an economic development consultant, should identify lands appropriate for industrial development and study the feasibility of developing an industrial park.
2. Recreation and Tourism represents a significant economic development potential for the County. Facilities to accommodate dispersed recreation and tourism activities should be encouraged to locate at appropriate sites within the county.
3. The County, working with the Craig County Tourism Commission, state and federal agencies should explore development of the old C&O railbed from New Castle to Eagle Rock into a multi-use trail facility.
4. The County should continue its participation in the Commonwealth of Virginia's Scenic Byway Program, in order to attract tourism traffic and spending to the County.
5. Development of overnight or weekly accommodations should be encouraged throughout the County in the form of bed & breakfasts, inns, hotels/motels, lodges, and cabins/cottages. Without more overnight accommodations it will be difficult to effectively tap the tourism market.
6. The County should encourage forms of economic development (which do not rely heavily on public infrastructure.) These include but are not limited to agriculture, agri-business, tourism, internet based business, and *biotechnology*.
7. The County should ~~support~~ *explore the services that the* Roanoke Valley Economic Development Partnership *may provide* as a ~~major~~ marketing force for economic development within the County.
8. The County should explore an Agricultural & Forestal District Ordinance or a Land Use Assessment Ordinance as a means of assisting farmers to afford to stay in business.

Human Services

Goal: The strength and success of a community begins with the welfare of its children, families and senior adults. It is the goal of the County to empower families to care for their children, as well as the elderly and to involve faith-based organizations, community groups and government to help make this happen.

Objectives and Recommendations:

1. In light of the county's increasing population (especially in the 25-34 category) the County should be alert to long range school needs. The necessity for more classroom space should be anticipated and County officials should remain aware that capital funding for expansion of the schools would be needed.

2. The County should work with developers and non-profit organizations toward the development of a combination assisted living/nursing home facility.
3. County Fire and EMS organizations should provide basic first aid and fire protection/prevention training at the schools and for community groups to help increase interest in volunteering and for the general welfare of County residents.
4. Craig County is the only county in Virginia with no public library. Craig County should pursue funding of a multi-function facility to serve as a library/meeting/technology facility.
5. The County should continue working with Blue Ridge Housing Agency toward development of handicapped-accessible rental housing.
6. The County should continue to provide facilities for the Craig County Child Care Center, the New Castle Commons, and the Women's Resource Center.
7. The County should work with health care providers toward the re-opening of a medical clinic in New Castle.
8. The County should encourage the development of programs for youth and seniors.

Natural Resources

Goal: Preservation and protection of the County's natural resources is vital to the County's high quality of life and efforts toward such preservation and protection are of primary importance.

Objectives and Recommendations:

1. Groundwater and surface water quality and quantity in Craig County are currently very good. The County should consider allowing communities well systems in subdivisions that are large enough for the system to be economically feasible and that have soils suitable for individual septic systems. Community well systems could allow for enhanced aquifer protection by reducing the number of aquifer punctures.
2. The County should discourage development in the 100-year flood hazard area, with the exception of seasonal dwellings.
3. The County should continue working with the Natural Resources Conservation Agency to conduct countywide soil mapping.
4. The County should consider commissioning a water quality study to determine the actual quality of our water supplies (not publicly provided water supplies).
5. The County should utilize its natural resource base to create jobs through low-impact nature-based tourism development.
6. The County should investigate the need for adopting an ordinance regulating intensive large-scale livestock operations in order to protect water quality.
7. The County should encourage the U.S. Forest Service to study the feasibility of developing a ski resort in Craig County.
8. *The County should review the U. S. Forest Services slow but steady increase in ownership of the County's total acreage. In 1985 the Forest Service owned 53.3% of the acreage. Today that figure is approximately 55%. Therefore, the County has less land in its tax base.*

Agriculture

Goal: As an important part of Craig County's heritage and current way of life, in addition to the economic benefits it represents, agriculture in the County should remain an important element in its future.

Objectives and Recommendations:

1. In order to maintain the rural character of the County, the current five-acre minimum lot size for selected agricultural areas should be maintained.
2. Preservation of agricultural lands is an important objective. Alternative methods of ensuring this preservation *may* be investigated, such as new agricultural techniques for smaller farms, development of Agri-business *and special method farming, which may include biotechnology-partnerships with biotechnology companies needing farm sites and development of specialty crops.*
3. The County should study development of an Open Air Market as an economic resource for local farmers.
4. The County should study an Agricultural and Forestal District Ordinance or a Land Use Assessment Ordinance as a means of assisting farmers to afford to stay in business.
5. In conjunction with the school system, and other interested parties, students should be given the opportunity to explore opportunities for agriculture as a vocation.
6. In order to promote agriculture related uses of the land, the County should pursue soils mapping for the entire county and ensure the prime farm land remains in the agricultural land use designation.

Recreation/Tourism

Goal: To improve the economy of Craig County, provide local job opportunities, and improve the quality of life in Craig County through tourism development and use of our recreational resources.

Objectives and Recommendations:

1. Encourage better marketing and servicing of established recreational activities, such as hunting and fishing to improve the income of local businesses and the County government. One option is to use the Craig Rural Electronic Village as a resource in marketing the County on the Internet.
2. The County should *explore the possibility of having someone to consider hiring an administrative assistant to* coordinate recreation, tourism, and event-development activities and solicit grant funding for tourism/recreation projects.
3. The County needs more annual or semi-annual events to draw visitors, increase community spirit, and boost retail sales.
4. The County, working with the Craig County Tourism Commission and state agencies, should study development of the old C&O railbed from New Castle to Eagle Rock into a multi-use trail facility.
5. The County should continue its participation in the Commonwealth of Virginia's Scenic Byway Program, in order to attract tourism traffic and spending to the County.

6. Development of overnight and weekly accommodations should be encouraged throughout the County in the form of bed & breakfasts, inns, lodges, and cabins/cottages. Without more overnight accommodations it will be difficult to effectively tap the tourism market.
7. Promote recreation related businesses such as pick your own crops and fishing ponds; provide liaison with companies and agencies to obtain financing and encourage the operation of schools and activities with Craig such as the Orvis Company Fishing and Hunting Schools and the Virginia Game Commission's hunting safety schools, bicycling tours, mountain bike races, and corporate sponsored bikes and retreats.
8. The County should study development of an Open Air Market as an economic resource for local farmers.
9. The County should continue to maintain and improve Camp Mitchell through civic group, government and business cooperation.
10. The County should work with other organizations in locating or developing age appropriate leisure activities for our youth, such as roller-skating, bowling, and skateboarding facilities.
11. Development of visitors' center with restroom facilities and community bulletin board should be pursued by local organization(s) to include the County.

Built Resources

Goal: To provide a quality and stable infrastructure base upon which to build Craig County.

Objectives and Recommendations:

1. The Craig-New Castle Public Service Authority should continue implementing its plan to upgrade existing sewer infrastructure to decrease the inflow and infiltration problems and increase the amount of usable capacity at the wastewater plant.
2. Power and telephone lines on Main Street in New Castle should be placed underground or relocated to the rear alleys.
3. The County needs to continue its plan to upgrade the Courthouse, Administration Building, and Sheriff's Office to address space and accessibility needs.
4. The County schools need to be expanded to meet current and anticipated growth, as well as provide permanent facilities for the Middle School (now housed in mobile trailers).
5. The County should work with other organizations to study development of a public library, conversion of the C&O railbed to multi-use trail, and construction of a combination assisted living/nursing home facility.
6. Route 311 should be upgraded to allow for more passing areas and wider shoulders.

Transportation

Goal: The Transportation System in Craig County should provide safe, efficient and convenient modes of transportation. Improvements to the transportation systems should be sensitive to the County's environmental, social, land use and economic resources and concerns.

Objectives and Recommendations:

1. The Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) should make substantial improvements to Rt. 311 from the Roanoke County line to New Castle by straightening the severe curves, providing more areas to pass, providing more turn-offs for slow-moving vehicles and school buses, and providing more shoulder area where possible.