

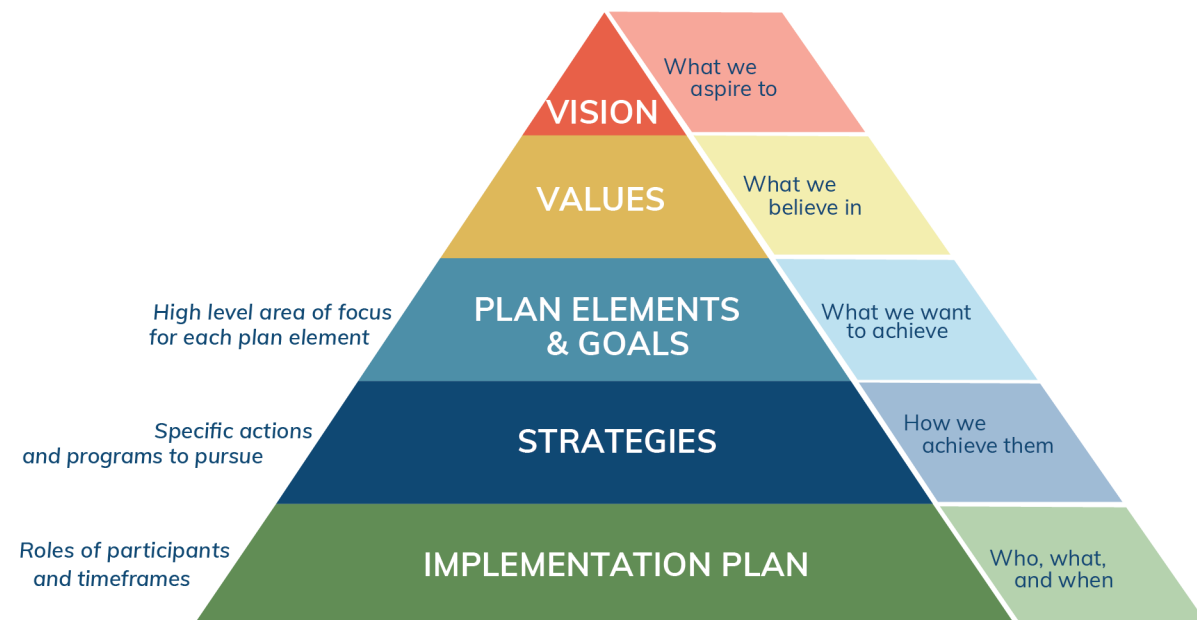
A scenic view of a lake with reeds in the foreground and a forested hill in the background. The water is calm, reflecting the sky. The reeds are tall and green, with some brown ones. The forest is dense and green, covering a hillside. The sky is overcast.

# **CHAPTER 1: About the Plan**

# ABOUT PEC2045: FORWARD TOGETHER

Comprehensive planning is the process by which a locality participates in and prepares for the future of its land. The Comprehensive Plan is an adopted, guiding policy document for long-range planning and future development of the County. The Plan establishes a vision for the future by addressing existing conditions and goals for a wide range of topics related to development and land use including transportation, housing and neighborhoods, parks and open space, community facilities and services, economic development, and community character.

PEC2045: Forward Together is Prince Edward County's Comprehensive Plan; it is a working document intended for use by the Board of Supervisors, County officials, local public agencies, community developers, and the general citizenry. When the Comprehensive Plan is followed, it facilitates rational and responsive decision making. Although it is not regulatory, it provides the public and decision-makers with a rationale for the resolution of zoning and subdivision cases and other land-use issues. The Plan describes the community's vision for where it wants to be in the next 20 years, along with strategies to achieve the community's goals.





# LEGAL BASIS FOR THE PLAN

Every locality in Virginia is required by the Code of Virginia to adopt a Comprehensive Plan. The Code of Virginia § 15.2-2223 and § 15.2-2224, among others, outline the required and optional Plan elements and offer a general framework for plan activities. Typical elements of the Comprehensive Plan include but are not limited to:

- Future land use planning maps and recommendations for development.
- A comprehensive system of transportation facilities, including maps and cost estimates for improvements.
- A system of community service facilities.
- Areas and implementation measures for the construction, rehabilitation, and maintenance of affordable housing.
- Strategies to provide broadband infrastructure.
- Urban development areas appropriate for higher density development, redevelopment, and infill.

State requirements for Comprehensive Plans also recognize that community development is on-going and ever changing. For this reason, the Code of Virginia sets a requirement that all Comprehensive Plans be reviewed every five years and amended as needed. Code of Virginia § 15.2-2230 requires localities to review the Comprehensive Plan every five years to ensure its continued applicability and usefulness to the community.



Section 15.2-2223 of the Code of Virginia states:

*“The Comprehensive Plan shall be made with the purpose of guiding and accomplishing a coordinated, adjusted, and harmonious development of the territory which will, in accordance with present and probably future needs and resources, best promote the health, safety, morals, order, convenience, prosperity and general welfare of the inhabitants, including the elderly and persons with disabilities.”*

# PLAN JURISDICTION

This Comprehensive Plan applies to Prince Edward County's official planning jurisdiction, which ends at County boundaries. The incorporated Town of Farmville, located within the County, is the County seat and has its own adopted Comprehensive Plan. *PEC2045: Forward Together* considers and coordinates with the Town of Farmville Comprehensive Plan to create a cohesive and mutually beneficial vision for the County and the Town. Similarly, a portion of the incorporated Town of Pamplin City falls within Prince Edward County, which will be considered in this Plan for regional land use consistency but will not fall directly under the Plan's jurisdiction.

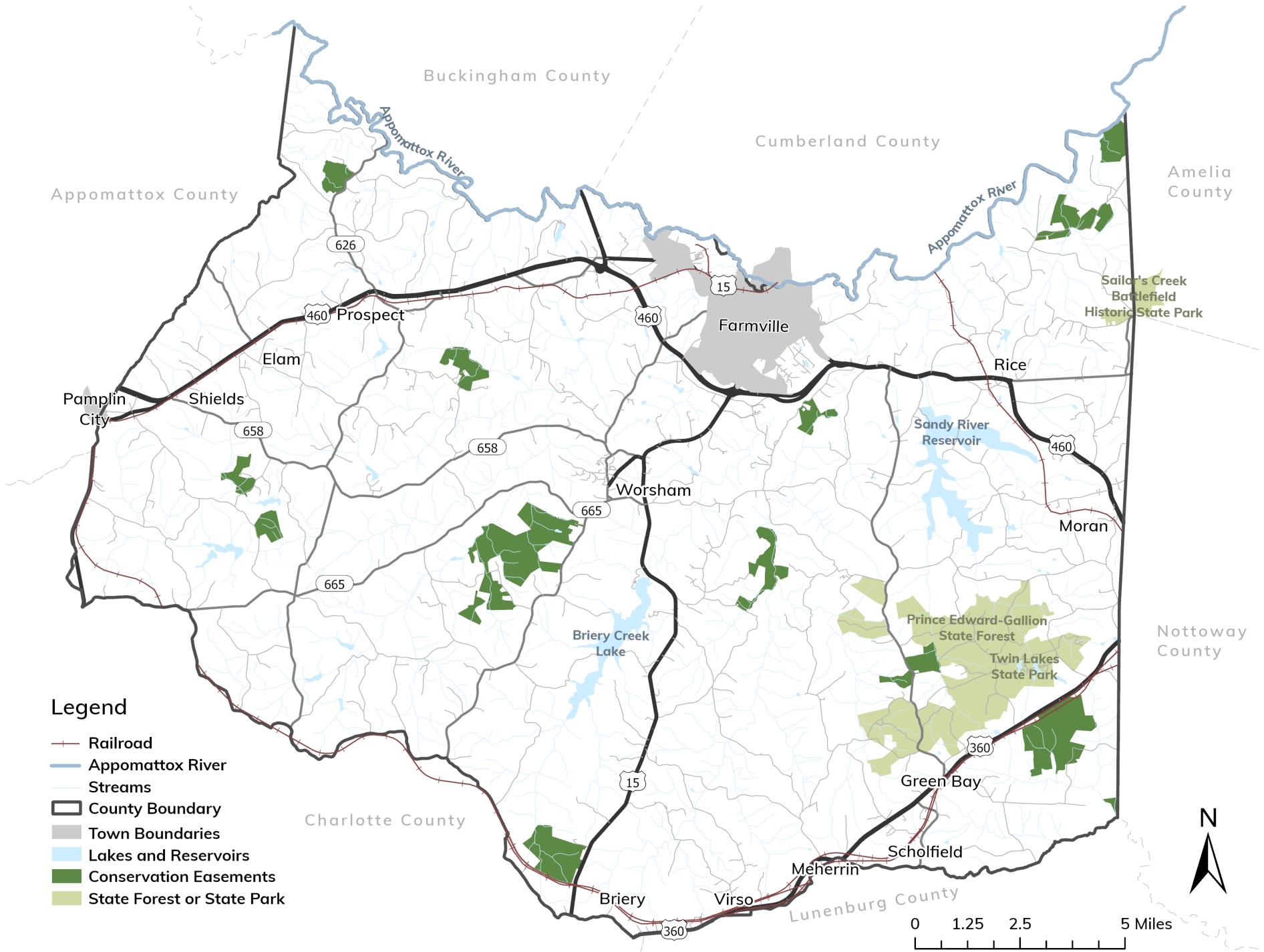
Regional connections shape the County's future and, as such, the Comprehensive Plan recognizes and prioritizes collaboration with its regional partners as a critical component of long-range planning. Prince Edward County is influenced by development and employment within the Town of Farmville, the surrounding counties, Hampden-Sydney College, and Longwood University.

While Prince Edward County has no political jurisdiction over decisions in neighboring localities, it is a member of the Commonwealth Regional Council (CRC), a regional organization that provides planning services and technical assistance to its member jurisdictions. Much of the information in this plan builds on existing regional studies and efforts, and many of the strategies will require regional coordination to realize the highest benefit to Prince Edward County.



Sandy River Reservoir

Map 1.1 | Plan Jurisdiction



# RELATIONSHIP TO ORDINANCES, PLANS, AND POLICIES

PEC2045: *Forward Together* is fundamentally tied to other plans, policies, and ordinances. This Plan includes data, priorities, and recommendations from many existing plans, studies, and strategic documents. The Comprehensive Plan forms and influences future updates to land development regulations and decisions. Zoning matters, capital improvements, transportation projects, and environmental and historic resource protection initiatives will rely on the contents of the Comprehensive Plan.

## PRINCE EDWARD STRATEGIC PLAN

The Prince Edward County 2018-2038 Strategic Plan establishes a mission and a vision to inform its seven Critical Targets: economic development, mobility, fiscal responsibility, cultural center, education, public safety, and collaboration. The Strategic Plan, along with subsequent updates and revisions to it, are important to implementation of the Comprehensive Plan and should continue to be guided by the goals and strategies of the Comprehensive Plan.

## ZONING AND SUBDIVISION ORDINANCES

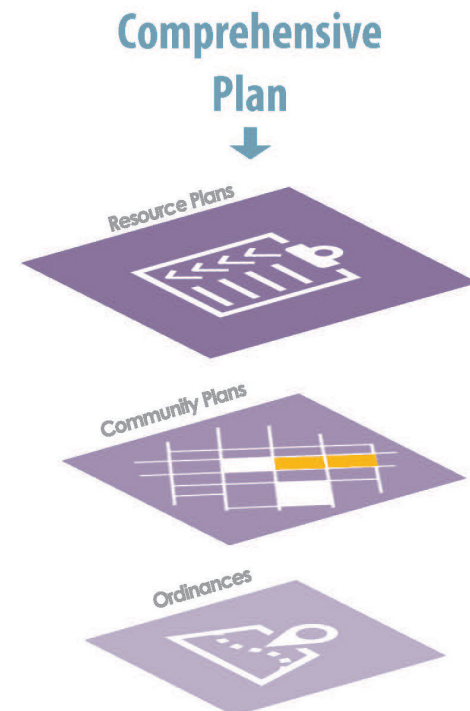
Prince Edward adopted its most recent Zoning Ordinance in 2007 for the general purpose of implementing the Comprehensive Plan of the County, and for the purpose of promoting the health, safety, and/or general welfare of the public. The County also administers a Subdivision Ordinance to maintain suitable residential land development. In addition to zoning and subdivision ordinances, the County has enacted soil erosion and sediment control ordinances and a building code to guide land use and development in the County.

Development regulations are the primary tools to implement the Comprehensive Plan. While the Comprehensive Plan offers vision and policy recommendations, development regulations directly control the management of the location, form, and character of private projects. The Comprehensive Plan should guide and direct

updates to the Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances. In addition, when a development or rezoning project comes before the County, decision makers must ensure that the project meets the specific standards of the Ordinances and the overarching vision and future land use policies of the Comprehensive Plan.

## CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

The Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) is Prince Edward County's planning and fiscal management tool used to coordinate the location, timing, and financing of capital improvements over a multi-year period. Capital improvements refer to major, non-recurring physical infrastructure and equipment. Under Code of Virginia § 15.2-2239, the Board of Supervisors may direct the



local Planning Commission to annually prepare and revise a CIP for up to five years to reflect changing community needs, priorities, and funding opportunities for the governing body's approval. The community benefits and the long-range vision is achieved when the priorities of the CIP align with the County's Comprehensive Plan.

## OTHER PLANS, STUDIES, AND INITIATIVES

Many other plans, studies, and initiatives have contributed to the creation of the Comprehensive Plan. Regional studies, transportation plans, housing initiatives, and other documents and planning efforts have informed the recommendations and strategies found in the Comprehensive Plan. This Plan recognizes these existing documents and identifies new plans and studies that may be needed to support implementation.

Existing plans and studies considered in the development of this Plan include, but are not limited to:

- Commonwealth Regional Council's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Plan
- Commonwealth Regional Council's Hazard Mitigation Plan
- Commonwealth Regional Council's Regional Bicycle Plan
- Hampden-Sydney College Campus Master Plan
- High Bridge Trail State Park Master Plan
- Longwood University Master Plan
- Prince Edward County Capital Improvement Plan
- Prince Edward County Public Schools Strategic Plan
- Prince Edward County Strategic Plan
- Sailor's Creek Battlefield Historical State Park Master Plan
- Town of Farmville Comprehensive Plan
- Twin Lakes State Park Master Plan





# CREATING PEC2045: FORWARD TOGETHER

PEC2045: Forward Together is the culmination of research, data analysis, and most importantly, community input and engagement that began in October 2023. The Comprehensive Plan update process has taken deliberate steps to guarantee that a diversity of citizen voices has defined Prince Edward County's priorities, vision, and goals – past, present, and future.



## Gather

PHASE 1

Research, Community  
Input & Analysis



## Draft

PHASE 2

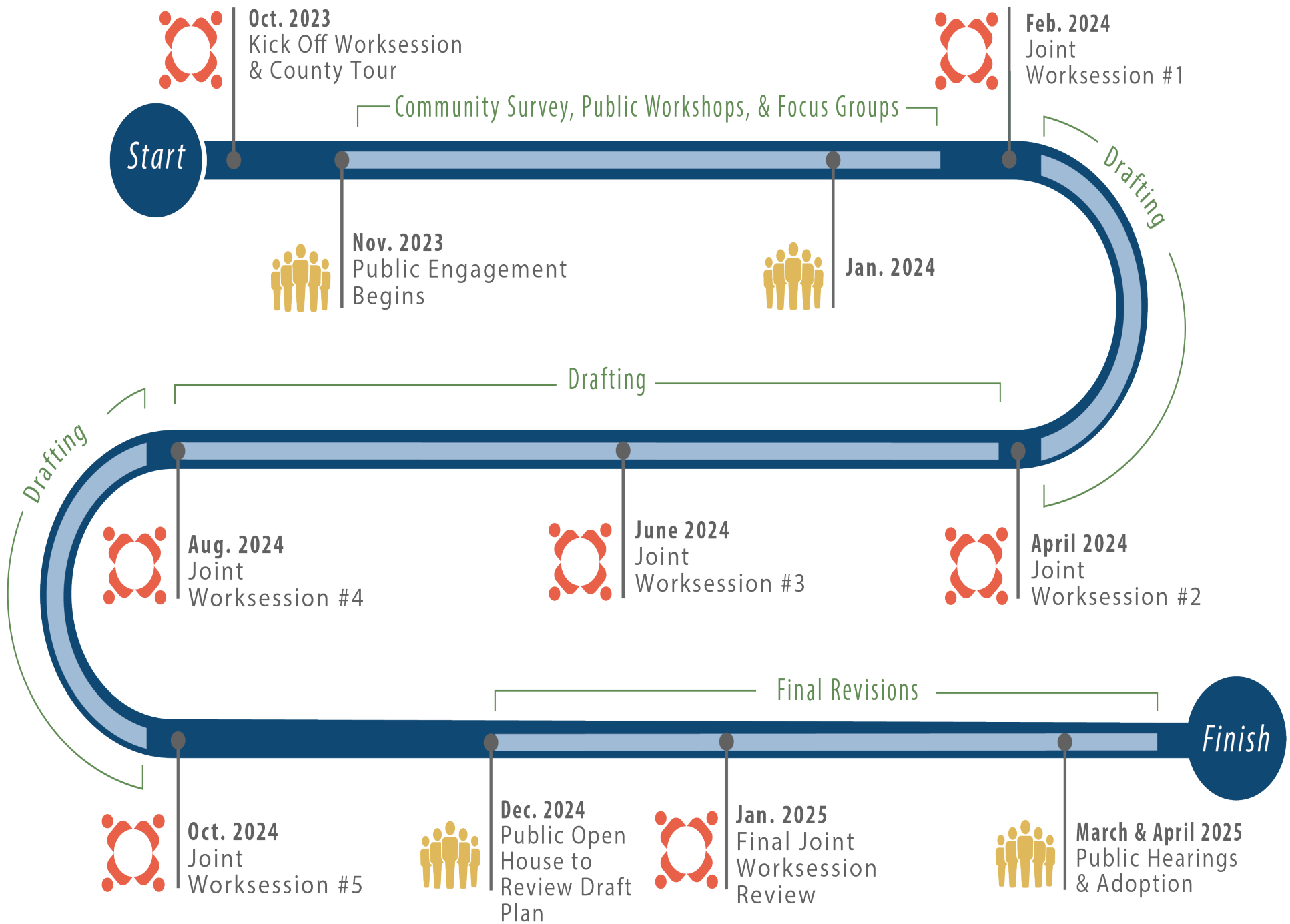
Plan Drafting with  
Planning Commission  
& Board of Supervisors



## Refine

PHASE 3

Community Feedback  
& Adoption



# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

## FOCUS GROUP MEETINGS

Six focus group meetings were held during the community engagement process. These roundtable discussions brought together representatives of 30 different major employers, businesses, educational institutions, students, and community organizations to share knowledge and ideas relevant to their fields of expertise.

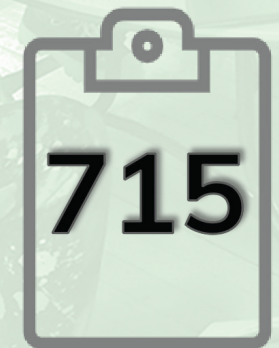
## COMMUNITY SURVEY

A widely publicized community survey was available both online and on paper from November 1, 2023 to January 15, 2024 to gather community input about priorities, needs, concerns, and desires. In total, 26 questions were asked: 15 questions were directly related to the Comprehensive Plan, 10 focused on demographics, and one question asked for contact information. A total of 715 surveys were submitted, answering questions on topics such as housing, employment, education, and economic development.

## COMMUNITY WORKSHOPS

Prince Edward County held two Public Workshops to gather input from the community on the Comprehensive Plan update. The workshops took place on November 16, 2023 at Crawley Forum on the campus of Hampden-Sydney College, and on December 13, 2023 at the Robert Russa Moton Museum. Sixty community members attended the workshops, which began with an introductory presentation that briefly explained the comprehensive planning process and detailed the importance of public input. Following the presentation, attendees split into groups to work on planning exercises facilitated by County staff.

Each group discussed and documented existing countywide conditions and issues, including strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities – as well as goals for the future. Additionally, each group focused on a key element of a comprehensive plan: Growth and Development, Economy and Workforce Development, and Connectivity and Recreation.



# WHAT WE HEARD

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

Five clear themes emerged from the public input collected from the Community Survey, Public Workshops, and Focus Group meetings. These themes contain key takeaways about the strengths and assets of Prince Edward County, the issues and challenges facing the community, future priorities, and the opportunities that can be seized upon to lead the County forward. These themes are the guiding principles of the Comprehensive Plan and are woven into the vision and strategies that will shape the County's future.



### Community Wellness

A healthy community is a thriving community. Enhancing and maintaining community wellness begins with providing adequate healthcare and mental health services, promoting active lifestyles, and fostering educational opportunities for citizens to better understand their options for health resources and food



### Academic Excellence

A quality education lays the foundation for the future of Prince Edward County. Students need modern facilities and resources to inspire innovative ideas and foster a desire for lifelong learning. Investing in the physical infrastructure of school facilities is complemented by providing cutting-edge programming and academic opportunities for students to thrive and gain the skills needed to work in the real world. Adult learners are also encouraged to further their education and learn new skills to be competitive in the workforce.



### Livability

Livable communities enjoy a high quality of life, access to community services, and a variety of housing types to fit their needs. With current projections indicating flat population growth over the next twenty years, it is vital to target strategic growth areas that will be attractive to families and young professionals, breathing new life into the future of the County. Likewise, maintaining the rural lifestyle and character that defines the local landscape will make Prince Edward a livable, enjoyable community that is inviting to all.



### Prosperity

A prosperous community has robust opportunities for job creation, workforce training, and entrepreneurship. Prince Edward County is a regional hub in the heart of Virginia, making it the ideal location to attract new businesses and grow existing ones, both large and small. Employers are looking for a workforce with 21st century skills in communities that provide a high quality of life to retain workers. Attracting and retaining businesses not only adds commercial choices for residents, but also creates a base of job creators that will cement the County as the go-to location for business and industry.



### Environmental Stewardship

Prince Edward County's natural beauty and rural landscapes are some of its greatest assets. With three state parks, two wildlife management areas, and one state forest, there are an abundance of outdoor recreation and conservation opportunities. Stewarding and enhancing the County's natural assets is vital not only to preserve wildlife and provide for clean water resources, but also as a key driver for ecotourism and economic growth without sacrificing land to development.

# WHO PARTICIPATED?

Commonwealth Regional Council  
Dominon Energy  
Farmville Area Chamber of Commerce  
Fuqua School  
Hampden-Sydney College  
Harlan L. Horton, P.C.  
Kinex Telecom  
Longwood University  
Luck Stone Corporation  
Maxey & Associates, P.C.  
Nash Surveying Services  
Oakwood Homes  
Piedmont Habitat for Humanity  
Prince Edward County  
Prince Edward County Public Schools  
Robert Russa Moton Museum  
Statewide Realty  
South Central Workforce Development Board  
Southside Virginia Community College  
STEPS, Inc.  
The Caton Companies  
Town of Farmville Parks & Recreation  
Virginia Department of Transportation

## FOCUS GROUPS

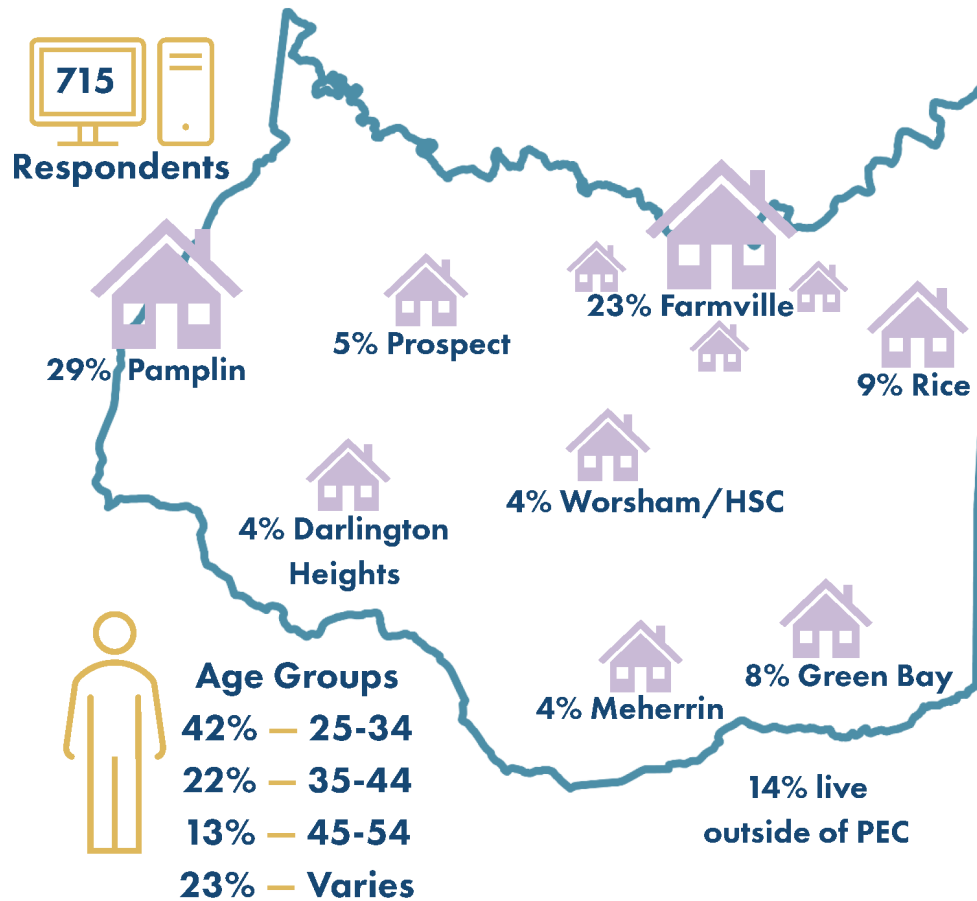
The focus group meetings brought to light common concerns and goals, as well as key issues and opportunities for the County's future. Listed below are the most common themes shared by participants.

- Education – Promote educational excellence by embracing public education as a top priority, from early childhood and pre-kindergarten to adult.
- Community – Prince Edward County is a strong, diverse, and close-knit community with a penchant for volunteerism and goodwill.
- Healthcare – There is a need for more specialists and facilities that encompass mental health, healthy lifestyles, emergency care, and primary care.
- Housing – There is a need for quality housing choices along the entire affordability spectrum to accommodate people in all stages of life – students, young professionals, families, and retirees.
- Environment – With excellent state parks, lakes, reservoirs, and rural lands, we need to preserve the natural environment, improve hazard resilience, and incorporate solar energy opportunities without sacrificing pristine viewsheds.
- Recreation – Enhance recreational programming and expand access to the County's outdoor assets and parks. There is also a need for a comprehensive indoor recreation facility providing both athletic venues and meeting room space for community groups and youth.
- Economy – With an excellent location in the heart of Virginia, we need to focus on educational excellence, outdoor tourism, small businesses, and growing from within. There is a need to expand infrastructure such as broadband and water services to facilitate economic growth, as well as bolster the workforce with needed skills in trades and construction services.
- Development and redevelopment – Strategic growth should be targeted in areas with viable water/sewer connectivity and transportation access. Corridor overlays, mixed-use design, and planned growth areas should be used to focus development in appropriate places and preserve rural lands.
- Transportation – Projects to improve highway accessibility and safety features, along with bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, are critically needed at the West 3rd Street interchange and along rural County roads such as Abilene Road.

## COMMUNITY SURVEY

A Community Survey was available to the public online and on paper for ten weeks, with a total of 715 respondents. The highest percentage of respondents live in the Town of Pamplin City (29%) and the Town of Farmville (23%), with the remainder spread throughout the County and a small number outside of the County. Forty-two percent of respondents are in the 25-34 age group, 22% are 35-44, and 13% are 45-54.

### Who Responded?



## WHAT DID THEY SAY ?



The top three things respondents value most about living in Prince Edward County: **sense of community, rural character, and natural environment.**



The top three priorities for the County as it plans for the future: improving **public schools and workforce development**, improving **housing affordability and availability**, and improving **access to high-speed internet.**



The most desirable types of new residential development: **affordable housing, single family homes, and housing for seniors, elderly, or disabled.**



The most desirable types of new jobs: **healthcare services, trades, and offices and professional services.**

## COMMUNITY WORKSHOP

Prince Edward County held two community workshops to gather input from the community. The first workshop was held at Crawley Forum on the campus of Hampden-Sydney College on November 16, 2023. The second workshop was held at Robert Russa Moton Museum in Farmville on December 13, 2023. Approximately 60 people participated altogether.

Attendees were passionate about their community and identified many assets that make Prince Edward County a great place to call home. Attendees were also in tune with the County's challenges, including improving public schools, attracting and retaining new residents, and strengthening the economy. Participants reflected enthusiasm for the future and a strong momentum to achieve creative solutions to set a strong foundation for the next twenty years.

The following summarizes what the community sees as Prince Edward County's top strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities for the future.

### ***Strengths and Assets:***

- Proximity to higher education as the home of "America's first two-college town"
- Agricultural heritage and rural character
- Natural resources and state parks/forests
- Economic development and tourism opportunities
- Rich history
- Small-town sense of community, good quality of life

### ***Challenges:***

- Negative perceptions of public schools
- Workforce development and recruitment
- Increasing housing options
- Enhancing emergency response systems
- Increasing healthcare access

### ***Opportunities and Goals for the Future:***

- Diversify the local economy to attract new businesses and increase tax revenues
- Protect rural lands
- Attract and retain a skilled workforce, particularly teachers and trades
- Utilize the incoming broadband infrastructure to expand access to education and workforce development programs, as well as attract new businesses
- Market the County's many tourist attractions, including three state parks and a state forest

# DRAFTING & REFINING



## PLAN FORMULATION

While the formulation of the Plan includes the Prince Edward County Board of Supervisors, Planning Commission, citizens, businesses, and other stakeholders, the Planning Commission is ultimately responsible for reviewing and recommending the proposed changes to the Comprehensive Plan as directed in the Code of Virginia. The Planning Commission met with the Board of Supervisors during bimonthly worksessions to draft and review plan content using crucial information gathered during the community engagement process.

## PUBLIC REVIEW

Comprehensive Plans are a product of the community's input as interpreted by appointed and elected decision-makers. As such, the Comprehensive Plan follows a public review period that ensures the Plan accurately represents the community's vision, concerns, and desires and has developed a course of action to address them. Following a series of five joint worksessions between the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors throughout 2024, two public open houses were held to showcase the draft Plan and receive community feedback.

## REFINEMENT & ADOPTION

With the inclusion of changes suggested during the public refinement period, the revised draft Plan was made available for public review and considered by the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors through a formal public hearing process and was adopted by the Board of Supervisors on [date TBD].

**Editor's Note: This section will be updated following the completion of the public review phase.**



# USING PEC2045: FORWARD TOGETHER

The Comprehensive Plan best serves the community when it is actively used to make recommendations and decisions. Annual review of the Plan is a best practice that helps bring the community's vision to fruition, while also allowing for the Planning Commission to identify necessary amendments and track progress. Chapter 9, Implementation, includes an implementation matrix — the prime place to start the annual review. The implementation matrix and performance indicators included in Chapter 9 should be analyzed and updated annually to measure achievements and reprioritize strategies as needed to meet community goals.



Private citizens, business owners, and developers use the Plan to better understand the community's assets, vision, and development goals.



County staff and Planning Commission use the Plan when reviewing zoning applications and drafting ordinances, striving for consistency with the community's vision.



The Board of Supervisors uses the Plan to guide decisions on budget priorities, capital projects, and ordinance amendments.



Regional partners use the Plan to understand local priorities and advocate for grant funding and studies.

