

DRAFT – 11/23/22

**NORTHEAST LAND USE PLAN
NELUP**

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NORTHEAST LAND USE PLAN (NELUP)

The Northeast Land Use Plan (NELUP) study area consists of 21,000 acres which are generally located north of Berryville Pike (Route 7) and the limits of the City of Winchester, west of the Opequon Creek at the County boundary with Clarke County, south of the West Virginia State line and east of Apple Pie Ridge Road and Stonewall Industrial Park. Interstate 81 and Martinsburg Pike (Route 11 North) extend from the southwestern limits of the study area to the northern area that borders West Virginia.

A series of maps have been prepared which identify future land uses, transportation, natural resources, historic resources, and community facilities within the study area.

Within this plan, the Martinsburg Pike/Interstate-81 corridor continues to be predominantly planned for commercial and industrial (C/I) land uses. Two Rural Communities Centers are located in the study area, Brucetown and Stephenson, both are located east of Martinsburg Pike. The eastern and western portions of the study area which are outside the limit of the Sewer and Water Service Area (SWSA) continue to form the boundary between the County's rural and more intensely developed areas. The NELUP also contains significant historical and natural resources which have been identified in this plan. The completion of the Route 37 Eastern Bypass, part of which extends through the southern portion of the study area, continues to be a top transportation priority in this area of the County.

Land Use

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT LAND USES

Interstate and Highway Commercial at Exits 317, 321 and 323

Located at highly visible locations on interstate interchanges, these areas should be designed to accommodate and promote highway commercial land uses. Particular effort must be made to ensure that access management for the supporting transportation network is a key priority as the function of the interstate and primary road network is critical. As these areas are highly visible, building and site design should be of a high quality to ensure that these areas put forth an attractive view for both residents and visitors; enhanced buffers and screening is also important along Interstate 81 and adjoining roadways.

Mixed Use Industrial Office

The NELUP identifies a number of areas designated as future mixed use industrial office. These areas are intended to develop with targeted growth sectors identified by the County's EDA as well as similar industries that are likely to bring higher wages, professional and/or technology jobs.

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Uses which contribute to air, significant noise, ~~and~~ light pollution, and businesses that create large volumes of truck traffic are discouraged in these areas. Consideration of uses outside the identified targeted businesses should only be considered if they are secondary and complementary to these targeted businesses.

It should be noted that areas North of Hopewell Road and exit 321 to the West Virginia line are within reasonable proximity of significant electrical transmission capability. In turn, these areas may be well suited to energy intensive development, if the other necessary utilities could be provided to sites, and the development provides benefit to Frederick County.

Interstate and Martinsburg Pike Commercial and Industrial Areas

Significant areas for industrial opportunities are identified along Martinsburg Pike, Hopewell Road, ~~and~~ Cedar Hill Road and areas west of Woodside Road. These areas are intended to further enhance the County's commercial and industrial areas and to provide focus to the County's regional employment centers. These areas are strategically located with direct interstate and regional highway routes, and rail access in certain areas. Sites with rail access should develop with uses that capitalize on this opportunity to reduce impacts on local roadways.

It should be recognized that while these areas are located near major roadways, the transportation network is strained. Future development should ensure that their impacts on local infrastructure are adequately mitigated. Furthermore, new development applications should not be considered in areas where the transportation network cannot meet acceptable levels of service.

The area situated between Old Charlestown Road and Stephenson Road located immediately east and west of the existing rail corridor is identified for future business uses. More specifically, business uses in this area east of the rail corridor should be of a neighborhood or community scale and be intended to serve the nearby residents of Snowden Bridge and the Stephenson Rural Community Center. Properties west of the rail corridor may be well suited to meet community needs for anchor retail, and further study of these properties may be appropriate to determine whether the inclusion of residential uses would be necessary to support such activity.

Existing residential uses are located along Martinsburg Pike, in close proximity to areas planned for more intensive uses. While many of these residential uses are planned to transition in the future to higher intensity uses, development applications should seek to mitigate their impact on these residences near term.

Extractive Manufacturing Areas

Located in the northern portion of the study area, east of Martinsburg Pike, is a large limestone quarry. As a primary industry, mining should be supported and protected as long as the quarries remain productive.

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~~In addition to the existing quarry location, the plan identifies future areas of extractive manufacturing land uses north of Turkey Run to Woodbine Road.~~ It should be recognized that extractive manufacturing uses are generally incompatible with residential uses due to the prevalence of outdoor storage and the emission of noise, dust, vibrations, and industrial truck traffic. Considerable buffers between these uses, existing residences and roadways are desirable to ensure compatibility and maintain commercial viability.

~~Additionally, impacts on viewshed should be addressed when considering new development applications.~~ Stockpiling of material should be avoided adjacent to residential uses and roadways, to minimize the visual disruption of the landscape; reduction in the size and visibility of existing stockpiles along Martinsburg Pike should also be considered.

RESIDENTIAL AND RURAL LAND USES

Residential Areas

The NELUP contains a mix of historical small lot residential uses, larger rural lots, and suburban residential within a planned community.

There are 2,340 acres of the study area that within the limits of the Urban Development Area (UDA). This area primarily encompasses existing Snowden Bridge development. Snowden Bridge is approved to develop with a mix of higher density housing types and an area of future commercial. This development is adjacent to the Jordan Springs Elementary School and a future public park.

Residential land uses outside the limits of the UDA consist of a mix of historical small lots and larger rural lots. Existing residential uses along Martinsburg Pike are envisioned to transition to commercial areas as the community grows, while residential uses within the Rural Community Centers could evolve and expand should public facilities become available in the future as identified below. Residential land uses outside of the SWSA, UDA and RCC's which are within the study area are envisioned to remain rural in character.

Clearbrook-Brucetown and Stephenson Rural Community Centers (RCC)

The NELUP study area contains two Rural Community Centers (RCC); The Clearbrook-Brucetown RCC and Stephenson RCC.

The Clearbrook-Brucetown RCC is located in the northeastern portion of the study area, east of Martinsburg Pike I-81, north and south of Brucetown Road and along a portion of Sir Johns Road. Brucetown is one of the oldest communities located in the County and contains a number of significant historic structures.

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The Stephenson RCC is located in the eastern/central area of the NELUP study area, east of Martinsburg Pike along Stephenson Road. Stephenson is a 19th century crossroads community which was established with the Winchester and Potomac Railroad in the 1830's. While the commercial elements of the community are no longer present, a number of historic dwellings remain.

Residential is the predominate land use in the [Clearbrook-Brucetown](#) and Stephenson RCC's. It should be recognized that most residential lots in these RCC's are less than one-half acre and contain single family detached housing. These houses are on wells and on-site septic (drainfield) and typically the structures are located closer to roadways. This historic development pattern cannot be accommodated within the existing RA (Rural Areas) Zoning District, which allows one residence for every five acres and requires primary and reserve drainfield areas.

[Given that the Clearbrook-Brucetown RCC extends to I-81 in close proximity to exit 321, it should be recognized that viable commercial uses in that area will likely need to meet the needs of interstate travelers as well as the surrounding residents.](#)

The NELUP seeks to further define these RCC's and promote future consideration of these unique areas. Future development within these centers should ensure that their historic rural character is retained. Creation of individual small area plans should be considered for these RCC's in the future, should public utilities become available.

Defined Rural Areas

The NELUP seeks to further define the boundary between the rural and urban areas of the community using the identified limits of the SWSA Areas planned for more intensive development (with the exception of the existing quarry) are within the limits of the SWSA. Land outside of the SWSA except as noted above is planned to remain rural in nature. Significant areas of prime agricultural soil and working farms are located in the western portion of the study area between Welltown Road and the limits of the SWSA. Areas east of the SWSA and outside the limits of the RCC's are also planned to remain rural in nature.

The NELUP also identifies significant sensitive natural areas in the southern portion of the study area; this area contains the Red Bud Agricultural and Forestal Area. The County should promote the preservation of its rural areas and support future expansions of its Agricultural and Forestal Districts.

CORRIDOR DESIGN AND PEDESTRIAN ACCOMMODATIONS

A significant corridor appearance buffer is proposed along Martinsburg Pike, like what has been established for Route 50 West corridor in the Round Hill Land Use Plan. This corridor buffer consists of a 50-foot buffer area, landscaping, and bike path. Roadway designs should plan for multi-modal street designs that will take all users into consideration. A 10' paved multipurpose path is identified along the southbound section of Martinsburg Pike, as

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established with the Rutherford Crossing development, sidewalks are planned for the northbound section.

Pedestrian and bicycle accommodations such as sidewalks and bicycle lanes should be provided along all primary and collector roadways within the SWSA. Bike paths or lanes should be constructed on the same grade as the adjacent roadway. Intersection accommodations should also include pedestrian refuge islands and pedestrian access signals. Pedestrian and bicycle connections between residential, employment and recreational opportunities such as the 3rd Battle of Winchester trail network should be provided for.

Where gaps exist in the pedestrian network, use of state programs such as Transportation Alternatives to address gaps in the system should be considered.

TRANSPORTATION

In support of the land uses indicated in the NELUP, a transportation network has been proposed which relates to the location and context of proposed land uses, promotes multi-modal transportation choices and walkability, and furthers the efforts of the Win-Fred MPO. In this study, there is a direct nexus between transportation and land use.

As noted in the Transportation Chapter of the Plan, as road projects and development or redevelopment take place, the development and associated transportation facilities should be accessible to all users.

Transportation improvements to the interstate, arterial, and collector road systems will contribute to improved levels of service throughout the study area and will shape the land use patterns in the short and long term. The County's Eastern Road Plan and the NELUP identify several significant transportation improvements within the study area boundaries. Within this study area, Martinsburg Pike (Route 11), future Route 37, and I-81 are the key corridors supporting future land uses. The plan calls for improvements to existing roadways and interchanges, new and extended major and minor collector networks and the construction of the Route 37 bypass.

Route 37 has long been the County's top priority. The completion of the Route 37 loop around the eastern portion of the County would relieve congestion on numerous local routes that have become congested as the County has grown and would offer relief to I-81. Development applications within the identified corridor right-of-way for Route 37 shall be expected to recognize this area to facilitate future improvements.

Improvements at Exit 317 are also critical due to congestion and safety concerns. The realignment of the northbound exit ramp of I-81 onto Route 11 to the location where Redbud Road currently intersects with Route 11 is needed and has recently been awarded funding through the VDOT SmartScale program. This improvement will align the interstate ramps which are currently offset and allow the removal of a signal on Route 11 north. The realignment of Redbud Road to a new intersection with Snowden Bridge Boulevard is also

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planned. This realignment would reduce congestion and improve safety in this area as well as reduce stacking of traffic at the exit ramps. This ramp realignment will act as an important first phase of the future larger upgrade of Exit 317 to a diverging diamond interchange (DDI).

A new interchange configuration for Exit 321 has been identified which would split the interchange between Hopewell Road and Cedar Hill Road. This improvement would provide for enhanced access to the interchange and takes advantage of proposed frontage roads planned for this area.

As commercial and industrial land uses develop, the widening of Route 11 will become critical. Development applications should identify and preserve the right-of-way necessary to accommodate future widening and provide for improvements identified as necessary to accommodate the development. In addition, as the Snowden Bridge Subdivision continues to develop, the completion of Snowden Bridge Boulevard from Milburn Road to Old Charlestown Road will allow additional opportunities of ingress and egress for citizens of the community.

The close proximity of the intersections of Brucetown Road and Hopewell Road with Route 11 have created conflicts and congestion for the road network in this area. The alignment of the intersections for these two roadways is a necessary improvement for this area. This alignment should be completed prior to the consideration of future development applications which would access this area. [Alternatively, it may be an appropriate to consider rerouting Hopewell Road east of exit 321 through the parcel immediately north to intersect Route 11 at a new location further north. This alternative would require additional study and coordination with VDOT and would likely require the closure of the existing Hopewell Road at grade rail crossing.](#)

Access Management is a significant priority for the transportation network planned for this study area. Proper access management is key to provide for a safe and efficient transportation network. Furthermore, access management can reduce the need for roadway widenings. Access management should be implemented through the following:

- Use of frontage roads
- Construction and use of planned minor collector roadways
- Proper entrance spacing and use of interparcel access points to bring traffic to common access points
- Proper traffic signal spacing and locations
- Use of medians where appropriate; medians should utilize attractive and consistent treatments

While access management is important for all roadways within the study area, primary and major collector roadways are critical. Route 11, in particular, will experience significant growth and redevelopment in the coming years. As this takes place, shared and consolidated entrances will be key in protecting the safety and efficiency of the corridor; this is particularly important as existing smaller lots along corridors redevelop.

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Roundabouts should continue to be considered as the preference for intersection design, consistent with existing VDOT policy; the use of roundabouts is preferred over signalization of intersections where traffic control is needed. Roundabouts are particularly effective when used in series. The intersection of Old Charlestown Road and Route 11 will be transitioned to a roundabout in the future.

Consistent application of Comprehensive Plan goals to achieve an acceptable Level of Service (LOS) on area roads and overall transportation network, LOS C or better, should be promoted. Further, efforts should be made to ensure that additional degradation of the transportation beyond an acceptable LOS should be avoided. Future development within the study area should only occur when an acceptable LOS has been achieved and key elements and connections identified in this plan have been provided.

It should also be recognized that State and Federal government, as well as private development, will continue to carry the primary responsibility to fund transportation improvements necessary to ensure the future health of the road networks and maintain an acceptable LOC. Development projects which impact planned future roadways, such as Route 37, are expected to preserve these corridor right-of-ways.

WATER AND SEWER

The NELUP study area contains 7,500 acres within the Sewer and Water Service Area (SWSA). The SWSA is a growth boundary that designates the limit of where public water and sewer could be extended if infrastructure and capacity is available. In 2020, the County and Frederick Water examined the boundary of the SWSA for the NELUP study area. Through this effort, adjustments were made to the boundary of the SWSA to include all areas identified for future industrial and commercial uses; these areas are expected to connect to public water and sewer.

It must be recognized that the capacity of the sewer system in this area is limited. While Frederick Water and the County will continue to plan for adequate water and sewer capacities in conjunction with the identified future land uses, the development community is expected to work with Frederick Water and provide for the infrastructure necessary to facilitate service.

NATURAL RESOURCES, HISTORIC RESOURCES AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES

The Natural Resources, Historic Resources, and Community Facilities elements discussed below should directly correlate to and expand upon the applicable chapters of the Comprehensive Plan. The Plan identifies Sensitive Natural Areas which encompass historic, agricultural, and environmental areas.

NATURAL RESOURCES

The County should continue to identify and support the protection of environmentally sensitive areas. Efforts should focus on the creation of greenways and stream buffers around

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waterways. Pedestrian facilities should be constructed to facilitate connectivity to other public facilities.

Development applications should complete detailed environmental analysis for properties proposed for development which identify significant natural resources. Environmental corridors should be incorporated with all development activities to ensure safe movement and protection of species and future development within the study area should take into account the natural resources located on and around their property.

HISTORIC RESOURCES

There are several historic structures and sites within the NELUP. Some of these include Kenilworth, the Branson House, Milburn, Byers House, the Milburn Road corridor, and core areas for the Second Battle of Winchester. The NELUP identifies some of these areas with a Sensitive Natural Areas designation; these areas include core battlefields and historic structures. Sensitive Natural Areas along with other historic resources should be buffered from adjacent development activities and preserved in their original condition whenever possible. It should be recognized that the Shenandoah Valley Battlefield Foundation (SVBF) has preserved areas of the Second Battle of Winchester; including portions associated with Stephenson Depot located north and south of McCann's Road. SVBF has also developed a historic trail network south of Redbud Road; future preservation efforts for historic sites and structures should continue to be supported by the County.

Development proposals which would impact historic resources should conduct architectural and archaeological surveys. Surveys should identify and evaluate all resources, and structures over 50 years old, and determine their historic significance and context to the surrounding area. Proposals that have historic resources on the property should incorporate the resources into their development and are encouraged to rehabilitate, restore, and investigate adaptive reuses. Historic roadways such as Milburn Road and McCann's Road should be buffered; access via these roadways for future development should be prohibited.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES

The public facility element of the NELUP should directly correlate to and expand upon the Public Facilities chapter of the Comprehensive Plan. The study area contains two existing elementary schools, two existing park sites and one future park site. The Clearbrook Volunteer Fire Station is also within the study area.

The importance of public spaces and facilities within the study area needs to be recognized and incorporated into future development. The development community should work with Frederick County Public Schools, Fire & Rescue, and Parks and Recreation to determine future public facility needs.