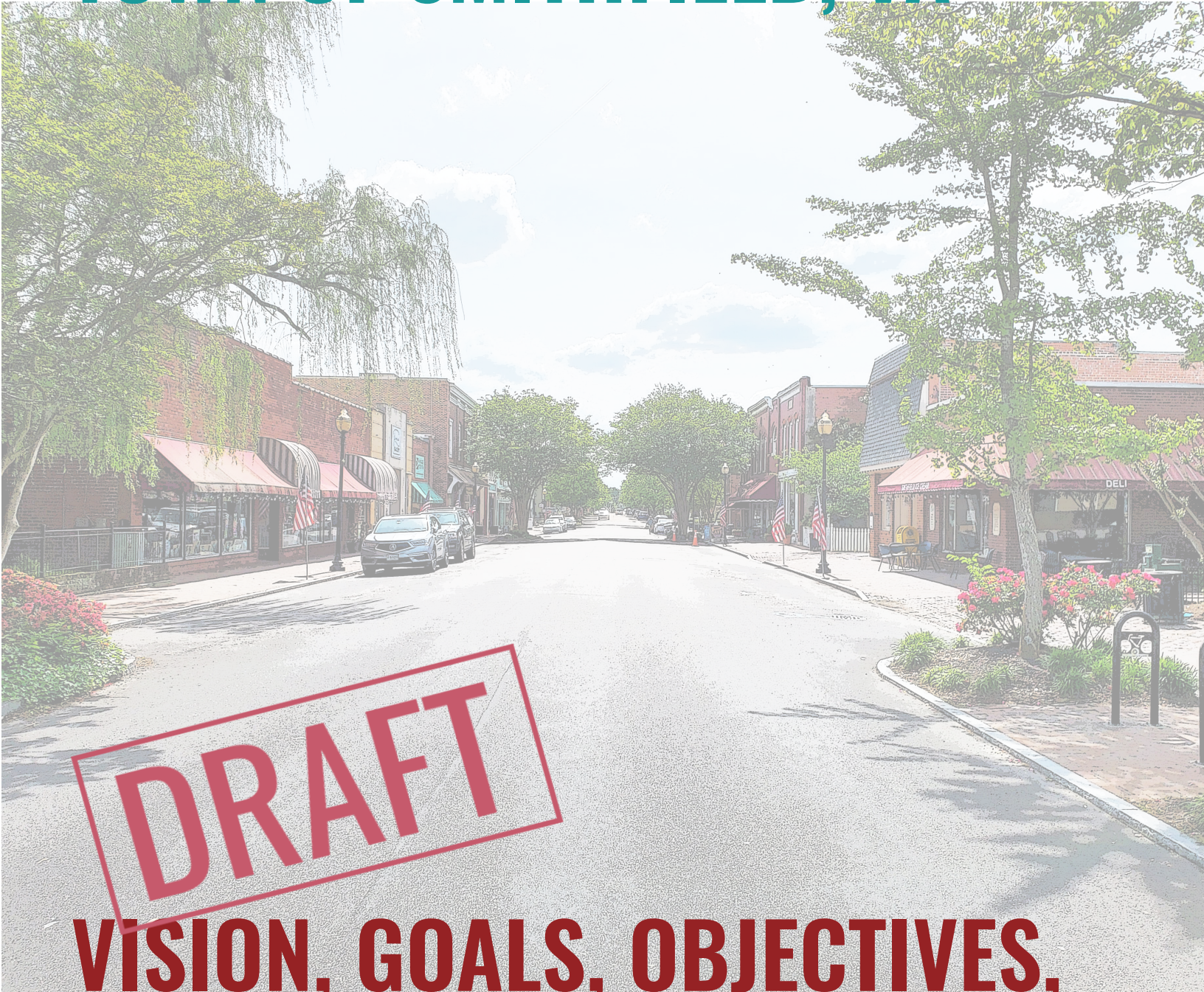


TOWN OF SMITHFIELD, VA



VISION, GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND STRATEGIES



JULY 13, 2021

ONGOING APPROACH

1. Analyze and continue to collect public input.

The public input has been phenomenal, please continue providing insight to ensure that your voice is present throughout the plan.

2. Create more of what works.

The historic district is highly identifiable with Smithfield and the quality of life in Town. However, not all areas of the Town share its character. Policies and rules guiding development should increase the “fabric” of the Town by learning from the historic area.

3. Relieve traffic congestion.

This plan emphasizes walking and bicycling as a means to reduce trips. Traffic congestion was brought up frequently in the surveys as a concern. In order to reduce traffic, local trips taken by car need to be reduced. Fortunately, much of the Town is in walking and bicycling distance which brings great benefits to the health of the community and the local economy.

4. Increase options and opportunities.

With these goals, the Town should begin to attract the new opportunities and options for food, retail, recreation, and other demands present in the public input process. However, they can be developed in a way that contributes to the charm of the Town.

What do you think? What else should be mentioned?



VISION STATEMENT

“Smithfield is known as a comforting place. In our buildings, streets, and neighborhoods, there is a charm that is present and attractive. The vibrant and productive local economy is supported by the Town’s excellent network of paths and green spaces. From border to border, Smithfield is a cohesive fabric of opportunities to enjoy life.”

What is a vision statement?

Over 10% of Smithfield’s population have provided input via survey responses. They have been fantastic to read and think about, giving the Planning team valuable insight into what the community finds important. The vision statement is a key piece of the comprehensive plan. Vision statements set the tone and character of the plan, identifying high level aspirations for the Town to achieve. This should be a clear statement that there is consensus around and speaks to multiple goals expressed through the public input process.

Why these words?

These sentences encapsulate the community’s future vision of Smithfield that builds on what it currently is doing to provide a great experience for its residents and visitors.

The vision statement emphasizes Smithfield’s reputation as a place one can feel safe and relax.

At different scales of the buildings, streets, and neighborhoods, this feeling is noticeable and charming.

Residents have consistently expressed their appreciation for the local businesses of Smithfield as well as their desire for even more food or retail options. Additionally, they touched upon the enjoyment of currently and desire for more options to walk and bike to access these potential new businesses.

This statement includes a strong vision of the Town as a “cohesive fabric,” referring to the level of quality present in the historic downtown of Smithfield, and other areas of the town that detract from the qualities residents expressed their satisfaction with.

The South Church Street area, for instance, currently is highway-oriented. This is a great opportunity for the Town to redevelop, infill, and enhance this commercial stretch. The goal is to ensure that from the neighborhoods east of Cypress Creek and Pagan River, to the historic downtown and neighborhoods west of Windsor Castle Park, there are places to sit and stay, opportunities to shop and eat, and many other experiences that contribute to the enjoyment of life in the Town.

New development should make people feel comfortable and truly feel that Smithfield is special.

Why no reference to “small town charm?”

The phrase “small town charm” was repeated in a large amount of responses. This vision statement explores what that phrase means. When asked, the community referred to sociability in commonplace settings, the access to nature, the diversity of small businesses, and many other great reasons people feel charmed by Smithfield. Rather than repeating the same phrase, the statement speaks to those qualities.

What do you think? Let’s hear from you!

LAND USE GOAL

“Ensure that land is used in ways that protect Smithfield’s longstanding relationship with the water by mitigating impacts to environmentally sensitive areas, that development and redevelopment is conducive to sociability through design, and that the local economy may reap the benefits of increased foot traffic.”

Objectives and Strategies:

1. Ensure highly productive, efficient, diverse, and varied use of the land.
2. Capitalize on proximity and density of diverse use to build shared value.
 - a. “Layer” uses vertically and horizontally to increase the amount of reasons a person would be in areas of the Town, such as the downtown or South Church Street.
3. Encourage the development of new uses in large areas of singular use.
 - a. Allowing for new uses, such as a sidewalk café or other neighborhood supporting use, can begin to improve the walkability and sociability of areas that are a single use.
 - b. The same applies to solely commercial areas, where new residential use of land can support the commercial uses and improve the walkability and sociability.
4. Develop a small area plans for more “fine grained” planning and design that can improve land use in areas such as, but not limited to, the historic downtown and the South Church Street Corridor.
5. Guidelines for big box stores, if approved, should pursue their “urban style” storefronts designs.
6. Eliminate / reduce requirements for buffer yards and setbacks that increase the amount of distance between varying uses.
7. Eliminate / change FAR requirements

What do you think?

Protecting the environment, ensuring quality development and design, and allowing for diverse use of land are ideas expressed through survey results.

Proximity, density, diversity, and quality allow for efficient and attractive use of available space and land within the town’s borders.

The historic downtown maximizes these characteristics, while the S. Church St. corridor currently does not.

There is incredible potential for the future of areas, such as the S. Church St. corridor to contribute to the “small town charm” of Smithfield.



- to allow for more creative design of buildings.
8. Public facilities should be utilized to increase diversity of uses where possible.
 9. Study parking stock, reduce and reform development standards from parking minimums to parking maximums, encourage parking to be located in ways that do not inhibit pedestrian or bicycle access to the land use. Locate new public parking facilities on the edge of downtown or the S. Church Street area to mitigate their impacts to the walkability of these areas.
 10. Encourage infill of parking lots to a more active use.
 11. Remove off-street parking where feasible (such as Main St.) for additional space for parklets or widen sidewalks.
 12. Utilize remaining space on parcels for auxiliary seating areas, alleyways, or other amenities that build shared value.
 13. Inventory the amount of “Third Places” in town and geographically identify areas that do not have easy access.
 14. Write out “chains of activity” for how residents and visitors might spend an entire day in the Town to identify gaps for attraction of new land uses.
 15. Amend and update the Zoning Ordinance districts to allow for mixed uses. Zoning districts should be consolidated and simplified.
 16. Rezone the “Highway Retail Commercial” district to a new district reflective of best practices to mix uses.
 17. Allow for Accessory Dwelling and Commercial Units where possible.

Parking and vehicular circulating to find parking can greatly detract from a positive experience of a place. By encouraging better standards for parking, these facilities can be managed and more efficiently accessed.

“Third places” are a place one goes to socialize or enjoys outside of their work or home, or school and home in the case of children, they are important sources of community.

“Chains of activity” are mapped possibilities on how to spend a day in Smithfield. Where does someone get their breakfast, lunch, and dinner? Where do they hang out? How many possible combinations are there? More combinations means more opportunities.

Accessory dwelling and commercial units help provide density at a similar scale as surrounding buildings, while improving the mix of uses.

TRANSPORTATION GOAL

“Reduce local vehicle miles traveled to relieve traffic congestion, by implementing comfortable, accessible, and convenient multi-modal transportation options. Increase the amount of people bicycling and walking in Town.”

Objectives and Strategies:

1. Reduce traffic congestion by reducing local vehicle miles traveled. Coordinate with Land Use objectives and strategies.
 - a. Plan and implement comfortable, accessible, and convenient multi-modal transportation options.
 - b. Prioritize increasing the amount of people walking and bicycling in town.
2. Implement Complete Streets improvements, particularly along Main Street and South Church Street corridor.
3. Implement continuous sidewalks throughout the entire Town. Sidewalks should continue the same grade with cars having to pass “over the sidewalk” rather than a curb cut stepping down for the pedestrian.
4. Provide, at minimum, a painted bicycle lane along all Town-maintained roads.
5. Provide traffic calming measures, such as curb extensions/bump outs, neighborhood roundabout islands, and other measures throughout the Town.
6. Work with the Virginia Department of Transportation to reduce speed limits in town and along the South Church Street corridor.
7. Work with the Virginia Department of Transportation to implement bicycle / pedestrian infrastructure on all state-maintained roadways.
8. Connect Smithfield to regional bicycle trails.
9. Create a bicycle and pedestrian master plan.

What do you think?

By “prioritizing” bicycles and pedestrians, traffic can be relieved, making it easier to drive an automobile in town as well.

There are many health, safety, environmental, economic, and other benefits to prioritizing bicycle usage.

Particular attention should be made to ensuring bicycling is safe for all users of varying ability levels. (Such as children, or elders)

The Town should “incentivize” trips by walking or bicycling, and make them as comfortable as possible in order to receive the benefits.

Safety is extremely important to feeling comfortable and enjoying a high quality of life in the Town.



that provides for a safe and connected network throughout all areas of the Town.

10. Amend development standards to require sidewalks, bicycle lanes, and bicycle parking.
11. Inventory bicycle parking available within the town to ensure that all areas of the Town have good access to bicycle parking, find where bicycle parking is missing.
12. Large intersections should feature urban-style pedestrian crossings with median pedestrian islands for safety.
13. Limit curb cuts and consolidate access points. Particularly, the South Church Street corridor should have buildings oriented towards South Church Street, with access and parking located to the rear where possible.
14. Avoid projects that widen existing roads.
15. Work with the Virginia Department of Transportation to study implementation of “pedestrian scrambles” at the intersection of S. Church Street and Main Street.
16. Utilize National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO) guidelines for best practices for multimodal implementation and safety throughout the town.
17. Explore the feasibility of a town circulator bus.
18. Partner with regional transportation organizations, such as the Hampton Roads Transportation Planning Organization (HRTPO) to provide regional commute alternatives.
19. When identifying “third places” and “chains of activity” in a day, explore how these locations are accessed from different routes on foot, bicycle, and by car.
20. Explore potential for water taxi services.

Bicycle parking should be as plentiful and available as automobile parking to increase the amount of bicyclists. (and make automobile parking easier!)

How these places are accessed is just as important as their operation.

URBAN DESIGN GOAL

“Create guidelines that ensure development follows good principles for the protection, comfort, and enjoyment of the community in the built environment.”

Objectives and Strategies:

1. Provide guidelines for creating positive microclimates (shade, wind protection, shelter from rain) through the dimensions/design of buildings and building features.
2. Utilize placemaking strategies to build many different activities and reasons to be within places throughout the town.
3. The ground floor of buildings should be ~12 ft. Tall for to allow for flexible use and adaptation over time.
4. Ensure that new developments comprised of many buildings are well connected and integrated with the existing fabric of development.
5. Storefronts should be transparent and accommodate large windows to provide for visual interest.
6. Where possible provide for more narrow storefronts along a street frontage to improve the vertical rhythm of the streetscape and increase density and diversity of uses.
7. Amend the Zoning Ordinance and design standards to enforce better design.
8. Create more detailed small area plans for the South Church Street corridor and the historic downtown, as well as other areas of town, to improve streetscapes on a block to block basis with fine grained details.
9. Ensure that there is good lighting along pathways throughout the town.
10. Ensure that there are places to sit and stay, without necessarily purchasing anything.

What do you think?

“Microclimates” refers to the immediate temperature, wind conditions, or other climate-factors around you. For example, close buildings and street trees can provide good shade on a hot day, making it easier to walk down a street.

Buildings should be able to be flexibly accommodate different uses over time.

Newly developed areas of Smithfield should feel seamless with other walkable areas of the Town.

Many of these strategies need to be codified, which makes it easier to build understandable expectations in the development process.

At a closer scale of “small area plans,” the community can plan block by block the improvements necessary to make their streets safe and comfortable.



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11. Utilize amenities such as pleasant views, sunlight, or views of other people to locate seating areas.
 12. Equip open space with opportunities for recreation and seating areas.
 13. Prevent the creation of long stretches of blank and uninteresting facades on buildings.
 14. Cross reference “chains of activity” in the town with the eye-level details of transportation between these locations.
 15. Cross reference “Third Places” with the experience of accessing these businesses.
 16. Allow for Accessory Commercial Units where possible.

New business ideas sometimes need an affordable, small square footage space to start out. Often garages or other small units can be converted to allow for a new use.

PARKS & RECREATION GOAL

“Parks and recreation facilities shall be well maintained, accessible, and well equipped for all community members, including opportunities for active and passive recreation.”

Objectives and Strategies:

1. Provide opportunities for river-swimming, both along the banks and in a potential pool structure, such as at the end of old S. Church Street or another suitable area.
2. Expand access to the water (for swimming, wading, or other activities).
3. Explore the implementation of a “play-scape” in facilities such as Windsor Castle Park to allow for adventure play rather than consolidated playground structures. Utilize topography and the natural landscape for play and to expand the ages that will use the activities.
4. Capitalize on through-trails/paths to enhance the bicycle and pedestrian network. Ensure core routes are well-lot for safe passage.
5. Diversity of recreational facilities for many different types of activities co-located, including passive recreational opportunities, such as a seating area by the Kayak Launch in Windsor Castle Park.
6. Provide for “pocket parks” or other small passive areas across the Town for places to rest or socialize.

What do you think?

More connection with the water could inspire more of the community to be concerned with water quality, as well as provide a great place to cool off and create memories tied to the Town’s river.

Adventure play allows for children to become more independent.

Where trails/routes can be planned away from automobile traffic, more riders can be encouraged because it is more safe.

Brainstorm new uses for existing facilities! Sometimes a well placed bench with a nice view can do a lot for the community.

To allow for recreation for all levels of ability, there should be many well maintained areas to stop and rest across the Town.



ECONOMY GOALS

“Provide for a strong, productive, vibrant, and diverse local economy with a particular focus on small business growth and employment opportunities. Capitalize on the proximity of businesses to build shared value and prosperity in the Town.”

Objectives and Strategies:

What do you think?

1. Identify placemaking opportunities to test temporary events, installations, or other features that attract people to the area and encourage them to spend longer periods of time.
2. Attract businesses that fill gaps in “chains of activity” in Smithfield, identify places where people spend their time throughout the day.
3. Ensure that there are places to stay downtown and along S. Church Street without purchasing anything.
4. Ensure that speeds through the downtown and S. Church Street are slower to allow for comfort and safety, as well as increasing the likelihood that someone stops to shop.
5. Ensure public parking facilities are easily identifiable and have comfortable access to main commercial thoroughfares.
6. Partner with local businesses or churches to utilize vacant parking lots for temporary events or additional parking.
7. Inventory “third places” in town (places besides work or home) where people can meet or gather such as a bar or coffee shop, ensure that these are geographically distributed throughout the town to ensure that people have access to this type of space across the town. Attract these businesses where there is a gap.
8. Build upon sense of place to strengthen the local economy.
9. Study and improve tourism opportunities.

“Placemaking” is the act of strengthening sense of place. “Place” is a specific location, such as the Town, that summarizes emotional attachment, community ties, and uniqueness to the activity in that area.

Slower speeds make for a more comfortable pedestrian environment, they also allow signage and storefronts to be scaled for pedestrian traffic.

Community members directly mentioned confusion about which public parking facilities were available and noted there were vacant lots unavailable for parking while events were going on.

Strengthening sense of place inspires community pride and attracts people to visit.

TOWN SERVICES & UTILITIES GOALS

“Provide excellent and well-maintained services and utilities that allow for the success of the community.”

Objectives and Strategies:

1. Bring back recycling services in the Town.
2. Pursue high speed broadband or greater internet access capabilities throughout the Town.
3. Explore the provision of Town-wide public wireless internet (wifi) service or in parks or other areas.
4. Increase density for greater efficiency of services as well as incentivizing internet service providers.
5. Improve cellular service throughout the town through co-located cellular towers or other facilities.
6. Explore options for stormwater management that allow for its use as an amenity.
7. Utilize public facilities for other comprehensive planning goals.

What do you think?

Where possible, public facilities can feature benches, trash cans, public bathrooms, or other amenities to help encourage more activity in the Town.



HISTORIC PRESERVATION GOALS

“Protect Smithfield’s stock of contributing historic buildings, encourage the adaptive reuse of existing buildings, encourage revitalization of historic properties, and look to the examples of historic success for quality of life in the town for future development.”

Objectives and Strategies:

1. Preserve the stock of historic buildings in town.
2. Provide interpretative signage or art installations to help tell the history of the Town, particularly areas such as Windsor Castle Park.
3. Allow for adaptive reuse of historic properties in ways that preserve their architectural integrity, but allow for new uses within them.
4. Provide events and programming that interpret the history of the Town for visitors.
5. Provide architectural-focused tours of the Town.
6. Collect and share stories of historic town residents.

What do you think?

Windsor Castle Park’s legacy of slavery was specifically mentioned in the surveys as an area in need of further interpretation resources.

The Town’s stock of architecturally significant buildings is a great asset towards placemaking and local economic goals.

HOUSING GOAL

“Provide high quality, amenity-rich housing opportunities for all residents and future residents of Smithfield.”

Objectives and Strategies:

1. Diversify the stock of different typologies housing.
2. Implement methods for increasing the amount of Affordable Housing.
3. Support housing where it exists with services and other amenities equitably throughout the Town.
4. Amend Zoning Districts to allow for more multi-family housing.
5. Ensure that all housing is supported locally by a mix of uses.
6. Allow for the development of Accessory Dwelling Units.

What do you think?

The Town is largely comprised of single family detached homes. To accommodate many different housing needs, the stock of available housing should be diversified with other multi-family options.

Diverse options and a supply of housing allow for more affordability and accommodates many different living situations.

For young people to be able to move back to their hometowns, varying types of housing need to be provided to accommodate them. Elderly residents may also need or want to downsize their housing.



Thank you for participating!