

Chapter 1: Introduction

Purpose of the Plan

The Region 2000 Greenways and Blueways Plan, serves as a guide for the creation of a regional scale, linked network of trails, parks, rivers, and other interesting destinations in the community. Individual corridors within the system may be designed to achieve different types of goals. In some cases, these involve human use, but in other cases, a segment may serve a strictly resource protection purpose in which case no trails or facilities would be put in place. Some of the goals that the system is designed to achieve are:

- Natural area protection
- Provision of alternative transportation options
- Connecting neighborhoods with regional destinations and places for recreation
- Designing communities that promote healthy lifestyles, and
- Maximizing economic development potential

In addition to laying out a basic framework for the regional system, the Region 2000 Greenways and Blueways Plan also includes strategies for implementing the vision - including a section on design standards and chapters on funding options and recommendations for management and operation of the system.

Regional Greenprinting

As communities grow, their regional resources such as farmland and forests are altered to provide homes, schools, roads, and shopping centers for new residents. Forward-thinking leaders have historically planned for this type of growth by laying out a strategy for the expansion of a community's gray infrastructure - the power lines, sewers, and highway networks. In more recent years, awareness about the importance of a community's green infrastructure (parks, trails, wildlife habitats, water quality buffers, etc.) has led to an increase in planning efforts directed at planning for long-term natural resource protection as well. This process is generally referred to as Greenprinting. Communities across the country have learned that protecting regional networks of linked green spaces is important for maximizing quality of life for residents and for protecting the natural systems that we exist within.

While the recent excitement over green infrastructure planning or greenprinting is still fairly new, the concept itself is not. Visionaries like Fredrick

Purpose of the Plan

Region 2000



Regional Greenprinting

Law Olmstead, who planned New York City's Central Park and Boston's Emerald Necklace, have been planning for linked green infrastructure in the United States for over 100 years. Today, hundreds of communities like Region 2000 have embraced the concepts of greenprinting as they plan for their continued growth and development and strive to assure that their quality of life in their community is maximized.

History of Region 2000 Plan Development

History of Region 2000 Plan Development

Here in Virginia, there have been a number of local, regional, and statewide efforts over the last several years that have helped build support for the development of this Region 2000 Greenways and Blueways planning process.

In 1999, Governor Gilmore held Virginia's first Greenways and Trails Conference as a way to bring the state together to talk about the role greenways and trails could play in the protection of Virginia's landscape. The excitement generated from that event led to a Second Annual Governor's Conference on Greenways and Blueways. This event added discussion about water trails, healthy communities, and ecotourism. During the following year, Virginia opened its doors to neighboring states to host the 2001 Mid-Atlantic Governor's Conference on Greenways, Blueways, and Green Infrastructure, which brought decision makers from all over the Mid-Atlantic region together in Virginia to discuss the need for more planning and protection for our essential green infrastructure.

In 2002, the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) updated its Conservation and Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan, or simply, Virginia Outdoors Plan (VOP). This 400-page document includes extensive information about local and regional needs for trails, greenways, and blueways and has recommendations throughout that call for localities to engage in regional level planning for conservation and recreation needs. DCR has also started to put together a statewide map of trails, blueways, and greenways and includes in that map several segments in the Region 2000 area. Their documents suggest the need for a James River Blueway, an Appalachian Trail Connector running through the City of Bedford and City of Lynchburg, a trail extension from Blackwater Creek to Poplar Forest, and a Lynchburg to Appomattox Trail.

Several local planning projects have also helped lead the region towards the development of this Greenways and Blueways Plan. In 2000, the Central Virginia Planning District Commission approved a Regional Bicycle Plan that defines a comprehensive cycling route throughout the area. Approximately one year later, the same body (now called the Region 2000 Regional Commission) formed the Alternate Transportation Needs Assessment Steering Committee to develop a Regional Greenway/Infrastructure Feasibility Plan. The plan provides the initial benefits, justification, and framework for developing this regional-scale Greenways and Blueways Plan and is generally considered the first phase of the overall planning process that includes this document.

When creating their feasibility document, the group used several public opinion data sets that had been collected over the previous few years. This includes survey data from Central Virginia's Regional Renaissance Summary Report, The Virginia 2001 Virginia Outdoors Survey, and the 2001 Virginia Voters Survey. The final report identified community goals and objectives related to enhancing and strengthening the quality of life in Central Virginia.

Region 2000 Vision

To bring together and build upon these many ideas and products, The Region 2000 Commission contracted with Greenways Incorporated in the Fall of 2002 to complete a greenways and blueways plan designed specifically for Region 2000. Funding for the project was secured through grants from the Virginia Department of Transportation's Rural Transportation Planning Grant Program and from the Central Virginia Metropolitan Planning Organization's Fiscal Year 2003 Unified Transportation Work Program.

The Region 2000 Greenways and Blueways Plan uses a "hubs and spokes" model to articulate a complete greenway and blueway system vision for the region. The vision includes, a primary loop trail that connects to each of the major towns and cities in the region and a set of secondary connectors (spokes) that connect local destinations and major regional destinations (hubs) such as Poplar Forest, the D-Day Memorial, and Appomattox Courthouse to the regional system.

The Individual corridors that make up both the primary and secondary routes are described in greater detail later in the document but generally are envisioned to be a mix of bikeways along existing roads, paved and unpaved trails, and swaths of green vegetated areas designed for species habitat and water resources protection.

Goals and Objectives

The Region 2000 community has many wishes for its Greenways and Blueways system and understands that the completion of a network of connected trails, greenways, waterways, and open spaces can provide opportunities to maximize the quality of life for the residents. Over the years, these wishes and interests have been crafted into a number of goals for the future. The community's goals can be found in local planning documents, in the vision statements of local groups, and in the handouts and flyers that accompany public discussions about growth and development strategies.

As the process for creating a regional Greenways and Blueways system got underway, these various goal statements were re-examined and combined with additional citizen input and steering committee recommendations to develop a set of updated regional goals and objectives that could serve as guidelines for this plan and as suggestions for future action that will move the Region towards completion of the system.

Greenways and Blueways Vision

Goals and Objectives



Goal 1: Improve safety from natural hazards

Objective 1: Develop flood plain ordinance to direct future growth

Objective 2: Design greenway system that facilitates the natural mediation of flood hazard

Goal 2: Provide an additional transportation alternative to cars

Objective 1: Agree to a clear set of steps for implementing the regional bike plan

Objective 2: Improve linkage between communities and destination landscapes throughout the region

Goal 3: Protect functionality of natural systems

Objective 1: Establish an acquisition program for setting aside prime natural habitat.

Objective 2: Develop a stewardship program for maintaining the value of resources once they are protected

Objective 3: Develop partnerships to protect water quality, including the restoration and enhancement of riparian areas.

Goal 4: Maximize opportunities for economic development

Objective 1: Link downtown areas to interesting destinations through a series of multi-purpose corridors.

Objective 2: Promote public education campaign that helps the community understand the economic benefit potential of Greenways and Blueways

Goal 5: Increase recreational and healthy life style options

Objective 1: Enhance access to outdoors

Objective 2: Increase the number and variety of recreational opportunities

Goal 6: Ensure sound growth management decisions

Objective 1: Lay out a framework for conservation that can be used in growth management decisions

Objective 2: Delineate connections for alternate travel between new destinations

Objective 3: Provide a regional context so that growth decisions can be considered in that light.

Goal 7: Create additional opportunities for education

Objective 1: Link schools with outdoor, natural laboratories for research and discovery

Objective 2: Enhance common outdoor recreational destinations by providing easy to access information about the history of the area.

Objective 3: Encourage environmental awareness and promote stewardship

Goal 8: Produce a plan of action that is realistic and able to be implemented

Objective 1: Choose one or two projects to start with in each County/Municipality

Objective 2: Start building public support and expectations for those projects

Goal 9: Improve coordination among the elected officials, staff, citizens, and state and federal agencies within the region 2000 planning district.

Objective 1: Create a regional oversight body and partnership network that will work as a team to complete segments.

Objective 2: Develop a comprehensive communication strategy including periodic presentations to boards and commissions, a community newsletter, media relationships, and an annual report

