

Town of Alderson

Comprehensive Plan

Chapter 1: Introduction

June 2016

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The Town of Alderson is a small community located in both Monroe and Greenbrier Counties with the Greenbrier River running through the town and dividing the counties. Settled in 1777 when this area was the frontier, Alderson became prominent with the coming of the railroad in the late 1800s. Impressive bank buildings, a large brick warehouse, and Victorian homes testify to town's prosperity, which continued into mid-twentieth century. Alderson is on the rise again, with increased population and a proactive town administration. In order to promote prosperity and ensure a beneficial life for town residents, the town has undertaken this comprehensive planning effort. Elected town officials hope the comprehensive plan will identify key issues facing Alderson and the action steps needed to prepare for the future.



Greenbrier River

Simply put, a comprehensive plan is a vision for the future of a community. While a big part of comprehensive planning is identifying existing and future land uses, the plan also looks at several other elements. A comprehensive plan looks at transportation, community services, economic development, housing, public safety, parks and recreation, and natural and historic resources. All of these elements are inter-related; therefore, a change in one element can have an impact on the others. A good comprehensive plan will also focus on key issues in the community that affect the quality of life for its residents, business owners, and visitors. Only by identifying those key issues and developing an action plan to address the issues, can a community achieve its vision.

The Planning Commission was instrumental in determining key issues in Alderson. At the beginning of the planning process, the commission was asked to take pictures of assets and challenges in the town. The assets identified during this exercise are elements the commission feels contribute to the quality of life in Alderson and should be capitalized upon in the future. The challenges are those elements the commission feels negatively impact the community and may negatively influence a visitor's experience in Alderson.

After the initial identification of issues by the Planning Commission, an open house was held in which the public was invited to identify issues in Alderson. Approximately 50 people attended the meeting. Results from the meeting can be found in [Appendix 1: Public Input](#). An online survey was created because the Planning Commission wanted to solicit additional input from residents who did not attend the open house. A total of 83 people completed the survey. The results of the survey can be found in [Appendix 2: Survey Results](#). The results from the open house and survey were presented to the Planning Commission to identify key issues in the plan.

Issues Identified by the Planning Commission

Assets

Alderson Community Center
 Alderson Railroad Depot
 Fire Department
 Renaissance Building
 Hospitality House
 Parks
 Memorial Bridge (pedestrian)
 Local Businesses
 Church Community
 Housing
 Greenbrier River
 Interpretive Center/Visitor Center
 Alderson Main Street organization
 Police Department

Challenges

Abandoned Buildings
 Empty Storefronts
 Greenbrier River
 Memorial Bridge (pedestrian)
 Housing
 Junk Cars
 Downtown Revitalization
 Flooding
 Interpretive Center
 Alderson Railroad Depot exterior
 Litter
 Sidewalks
 Infrastructure
 ,Lack of Code Enforcement

Stakeholder interviews were essential in identifying key issues that specific organizations, business owners, or key people have in Alderson. Stakeholders were identified by the Planning Commission and included the Alderson Action Group, Alderson Main Street, Alderson Public Library, Alderson Lions Club, Downstream Strategies, Friends of the Lower Greenbrier, Alderson Renaissance Corporation, Alderson Women's Club, the Volunteer Fire Department, and the 4th of July Committee.

Each chapter in the Alderson Comprehensive plan details a key issue. This will help the Town implement the recommendations needed to achieve the goals of the plan.

- ☀ Chapter 2: Community Services
- ☀ Chapter 3: Land Use
- ☀ Chapter 4: Downtown Revitalization
- ☀ Chapter 5: Implementation



Public Meeting

Input from the Planning Commission and public helped develop a vision statement and goals. The vision statement reflects how Alderson sees itself in the next ten years.

Vision Statement

Alderson exemplifies small town living at its best, a vibrant community with close-knit neighborhoods and the state's largest Fourth of July celebration. The town continues to develop a growing, strong local economy with a solid tax base. Alderson maintains a commitment to preserve and promote the town's history and natural beauty, especially the scenic Greenbrier River and Memorial Bridge. Visitors and residents are drawn to Alderson's many outdoor recreational opportunities, including parks, walking trails, and river access. Alderson attracts new residents and visitors with the town's arts community and its commitment to sustainability by "going green." Alderson strives to be an inclusive town, working with businesses to eliminate barriers and recruiting a talented workforce and providing equal opportunity for all its citizens.

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Goal 1: Provide improved water, wastewater, and storm-water infrastructure and services to residents

Goal 2: Enhance community resilience and safety

Goal 3: Ensure a safe vehicle and pedestrian network by improving existing roadways and sidewalks

Goal 4: Maintain and develop park facilities and programs to meet the recreational needs of town residents

Goal 5: Encourage land use planning to preserve the character of the town

Goal 6: Support the efforts of town revitalization to increase economic development opportunities

Once the vision statement was developed, goals were formulated. The goals address each of the key issues and aim to reflect the long-term desires of the community.

To help with implementation, Chapter 5 contains an implementation matrix as part of the comprehensive plan. The matrix details all of the projects recommended in the plan, as well as potential partners and funding sources. The matrix also details the priority level of each project. The implementation matrix was prioritized with help from the public. A final open house and Internet survey asked the public to select their highest priority project under each goal. The results of the prioritization were presented to the Alderson Planning Commission for review and consideration in drafting the final implementation matrix. Results from the open house can be found in [Appendix 1: Public Input](#).

The Town of Alderson receives its authority to plan from the West Virginia Code, Chapter 8A: Land Use Planning. This chapter gives local governments the authority to create a planning commission, and board of zoning appeals; develop a comprehensive plan; a subdivision and land development ordinance, and a zoning ordinance; as well as set procedures for methods of securities, appeals, enforcement, and enforcement of ordinances. Several mandatory elements are required in a comprehensive plan per Chapter 8A. The following tables display the mandatory elements and where they can be found within the Town of Alderson Comprehensive Plan.

Required Objectives for a Comprehensive Plan	
<i>W. VA. Code §8A-3-4</i>	
Code Provision	Chapter
Statement of goals and objectives	1, 2, 3,4, 5
Timeline on how to meet short and long-term goals and objectives	5
Action plan with implementation strategies	2, 3, 4, 5
Recommendations of a financial program for necessary public funding	5
Statement of recommendations concerning future land use and development policies	3
A program to encourage regional planning, coordination, and cooperation	5
Maps, plats, and/or charts- that present basic information on the land, including present and future uses	3

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Required Components for a Comprehensive Plan	
<i>W. VA. Code §8A-3-4(c)</i>	
Code Provision	Page #
<i>Land Use</i>	
Different land uses (including, for example, residential, agricultural, historic, conservation)	3-2, 3-5, 3-12, 3-13
Population density and building intensity standards	3-2, 3-9, 3-12, 4-2
Growth or decline management	3-9, 4-2, 4-12
Projected population growth or decline	4-2, 4-3
Constraints on development (including identifying flood-prone and subsidence areas)	3-4, 3-5
<i>Housing</i>	
Analyze projected housing needs and different types of housing needed (including affordable housing and accessible housing for persons with disabilities)	3-9
Identify the number of projected housing units and land needed	3-10
Address substandard housing	3-9, 3-10, 3-14, 3-15
Rehabilitate and improve existing housing	3-9, 3-10, 3-14, 3-15
Adaptive reuse of buildings into housing	3-10
<i>Transportation</i>	
Vehicular, transit, air, port, railroad, river, and any other mode	2-3, 2-4, 2-5
Movement of traffic and parking	2-3, 2-4, 2-11, 2-18
Pedestrian and bicycle systems	2-4, 2-11, 2-13, 2-17, 2-19, 2-20, 2-21, 2-22
Intermodal transportation	2-3, 2-4, 2-5
<i>Economic development</i>	
Analyze opportunities, strengths and weaknesses	4-9, 4-10, 4-11
Identify and designate economic development sites and/or sectors	4-10, 4-12, 4-13
Identify types of economic development sought	4-10, 4-13
<i>Miscellaneous Components</i>	
Infrastructure	2-2, 2-9, 2-10, 2-14, 2-15, 2-16, 2-17
Public Services	2-3, 2-9, 2-10, 2-11, 2-15, 2-16, 2-17
Rural	3-12
Recreation	2-5, 2-6, 2-7, 2-8, 2-9, 2-11, 2-12, 2-20, 2-21, 2-22
Community Design	3-15
Preferred development areas	3-12, 3-13
Renewal and/or redevelopment	3-9, 3-10
Financing	5-2 through 5-14
Historic preservation	3-8, 3-10